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ABSTRACT

This working paper assembles chapters written by onsite researchers about program implementation in each of seven cities included in the Job-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families. This report, which provides a "snapshot" of each site, documents the nature and extent of implementation as of that point in time. Chapter 1 describes the Jobs-Plus model and provides an overview of the report. Each of the remaining seven chapters describes the nature and extent of implementation of the Jobs-Plus program in a particular site. Key sections of each chapter are program highlights; program infrastructure (staffing, facilities); program flow (outreach and enrollment, orientation, assessment, job search and job club, job development, education and training, job retention and

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advancement); and financial incentives to work, and community support for work. The sites are "Jobs-Plus in Baltimore" (Linda Kaljee); "Jobs-Plus in Chattanooga" (Linda Persse); "Jobs-Plus in Cleveland" (Linda Persse); "Jobs-Plus in Dayton" (Crystal Dunson, Theresa Myadze); "Jobs-Plus in Los Angeles" (Earl Johnson et al.); "Jobs-Plus in St. Paul" (Sandy Gerber); and "Jobs-Plus in Seattle" (Edward B. Liebow, Carolina Katz). (YLB)

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A Jobs-Plus Working Paper

Jobs-Plus Site-by-Site: An Early Look at Program Implementation

Edited by
Susan Philipson Bloom
with Susan Blank

Contributors
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At MDRC, Susan Philipson Bloom led the overall effort resulting in the preparation of this working paper. She designed the field guide used to collect information about each site's program, monitored the progress of data collection, reviewed the chapters, and provided substantive feedback to the authors. She also guided the review process and coordinated the work of all MDRC staff and consultants. Susan Blank helped revise the draft chapters and edited the entire volume.

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The Editors

Chapter 1

Introduction

This working paper is part of a series of documents that will examine the operation and effectiveness of the Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families.[1] When fully implemented, this experimental program will offer an innovative package of employment and training services, financial incentives to encourage work, and community supports for work to residents in selected public housing developments.

About This Report

This working paper assembles chapters written by on-site researchers from Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) about program implementation in each of the seven cities initially included in the Jobs-Plus demonstration. In most cases, the information is current as of the end of 1999. However, in some cases, more up-to-date information is provided when important changes have recently taken place. This report, which provides a "snapshot" of each site, documents the nature and extent of implementation as of that point in time. Future updates are planned to describe how the programs evolve and grow.

Purpose

The working paper tells the story of how Jobs-Plus has begun to unfold in the demonstration cities and will serve as a basic resource and reference guide for all parties involved in the demonstration, as well as for a broader audience.

The report documents the considerable progress that the sites have made in designing and implementing a Jobs-Plus program. Housing authority administrators and policymakers at the local, state, and national levels have long been concerned with the question of how to promote self-sufficiency among public housing residents. Moreover, the new federal housing law of 1998 elevates this goal to a much more prominent level. Yet most housing authorities have little experience of their own on which to draw in deciding how to pursue this objective, and there are few good places to look for guidance. These case studies may provide housing authorities across the country with good examples of strategies they might want to try, based on practical, real-world experience.

Practitioners and researchers involved in welfare-to-work and employment training programs also may find it helpful to learn about the new strategies that are being tried in this demonstration. Researchers interested in studying the problems of concentrated poverty and joblessness may want to follow the efforts of Jobs-Plus to create high-employment, mixed-income public housing communities.

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[1]For a full description of the origins and early accomplishments of the Jobs-Plus demonstration, see James A. Riccio, *Mobilizing Public Housing Communities for Work* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1999).

Because the report documents weaknesses as well as accomplishments, MDRC and the sites will use it to identify areas in need of special attention and technical assistance. The working paper aims to describe and document — not to evaluate — program implementation. The following chapters provide part of the ongoing documentation of the Jobs-Plus treatment in each development.

The Jobs-Plus Model

The goal of Jobs-Plus is ambitious: to transform low-work, high-welfare public housing developments into high-work, low-welfare communities. Central to the program's approach are three main program components:

- **Employment-related activities and services**, including pre- and post-employment activities (such as job search, education, training, job development, and case management) and support services (such as child care and transportation assistance);
- **Enhanced financial incentives to work** — most notably, reducing the amount by which rent increases as earnings grow; and
- **"Community support for work,"** such as fostering work-related information-sharing, peer support, and mutual aid among residents and with people living outside public housing.

Jobs-Plus is distinctive in combining these components and targeting them toward all working-age residents. It is hoped that "saturating" a housing development with services, incentives, and social supports will result in steady employment for a substantial majority of working-age residents. (See Figure 1.1.)

Figure 1.1

The Jobs-Plus Approach

Saturation —

Reaching all working-age residents through:

Employment-related services + Financial incentives + Community support for work = Big improvements in employment, earnings, and quality of life

Why Now?

The design and implementation of Jobs-Plus can be thought of as a work in progress at each site. Why was this point in time chosen to document progress toward implementation? In March 1997, eight developments in seven cities were selected for the Jobs-Plus demonstration. Some sites began serving a small number of residents in 1998. By the end of 1999, when data collection for this working paper was complete, all sites had at least one full year of implementation. Program services were established with enough of the infrastructure in place to allow us to see the basic shape of the initiative. The demonstration is scheduled to continue for five years, until 2003.

The development of job search, education, training, and support services aimed at all working-age residents in a housing development has been very challenging. Adding the other two components of Jobs-Plus — new financial work incentives and community supports for work — increased the challenge severalfold. This, along with the complexities of building a new decision-making collaborative and getting a program infrastructure in place, helps explain why a fully formed, fully operational program is still to come.

Programs are still fairly small in scale and fragile, but they are all making a concerted effort to strengthen and expand Jobs-Plus. Readers should be aware that sites are at different stages of program implementation due to many factors, including delays in staffing and/or turnover of program staff, the strength of resident participation and leadership, the nature of preexisting relationships among service providers and the housing authority, and local conditions and circumstances. Although the sites have not yet achieved their full potential, their efforts are noteworthy and promising.

This report presents chapters on seven of the eight Jobs-Plus developments. The program at William Mead Homes in Los Angeles is not included in this volume due to extensive staff turnover and a temporary suspension of activities. The program is currently being rebuilt and will be described in future reports.

Two of the sites included in this working paper are not continuing as part of the research demonstration. They are not continuing for very different reasons:

- The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority and MDRC mutually decided to withdraw the Cleveland program from the national Jobs-Plus demonstration because the program had not assembled enough of the elements of the program model in sufficient time to meet the schedule of the research study. Despite its withdrawal, some Jobs-Plus activities that began during the demonstration period may continue at Woodhill Homes Estates.

- In 1999 the Seattle Housing Authority was awarded a HOPE VI grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to tear down and rebuild the Rainier Vista Garden Community, the location of Seattle's Jobs-Plus program. Jobs-Plus will continue to operate, in modified form, during this period. However, the impending temporary relocation of residents and disruptions to the community, along with the special circumstances of operating the program in the context of HOPE VI, make it problematic to keep Seattle in the national demonstration. Recognizing that much can still be learned

from Seattle's experience in the coming years, the housing authority, HUD, and MDRC are planning to conduct a separate evaluation of the city's combined Jobs-Plus/HOPE VI intervention.

The chapters that report on the implementation of Jobs-Plus in Cleveland and Seattle do so through the end of 1999, prior to their termination from the formal Jobs-Plus demonstration.

Data Sources

MDRC's on-site researchers conducted the field research and provided initial drafts of each chapter. These local researchers work part time on various aspects of Jobs-Plus research. Some are university-based, while others are independent consultants. They used a standard field research template to prepare their chapters. The primary data sources include:

Interviews with program staff;

- Interviews with representatives of the Jobs-Plus collaborative (composed of the organizations that sponsor and govern the program), service providers, and other local organizations and agencies;
- Interviews with resident leaders;
- Interviews with a limited number of program participants;
- Observations of the program in action;
- Program documents, including internal reports on participation; and
- In-depth knowledge of the program operation gleaned from field research over an extended period of time.

Overview of the Report

Each of the chapters in this report describes the nature and extent of implementation of the Jobs-Plus program in a particular site. The chapters' key sections are described below.

Program Infrastructure

Every new program faces challenges in terms of developing a decision-making and management structure, assembling a staff, and setting up an office. Each chapter explains how the Jobs-Plus site has accomplished these tasks.

Staffing. Staffing structures for Jobs-Plus vary across the sites but typically include a Project Director and several line staff who work directly with residents. Some of these staff are employees of the housing authority, while others may be "on loan" from another agency. Some are purchased from service providers under contract to Jobs-Plus. Residents themselves fill some of these positions, such as Outreach Worker, Administrative Assistant, and Receptionist. The full complement of staff is now in place in most sites, although some took much longer to hire a Project Director and others have experienced extensive staff turnover.

Facilities. As a place-based initiative, Jobs-Plus requires a visible on-site presence in each of the developments. Typically, sites have converted apartments into office space for the program or have renovated existing community space to accommodate Jobs-Plus offices. Key program services such as outreach, intake, assessment, orientation, case management, and job development are generally provided at these on-site offices. However, for the bulk of their education and training services, many programs rely on referrals to off-site service providers.

Program Flow

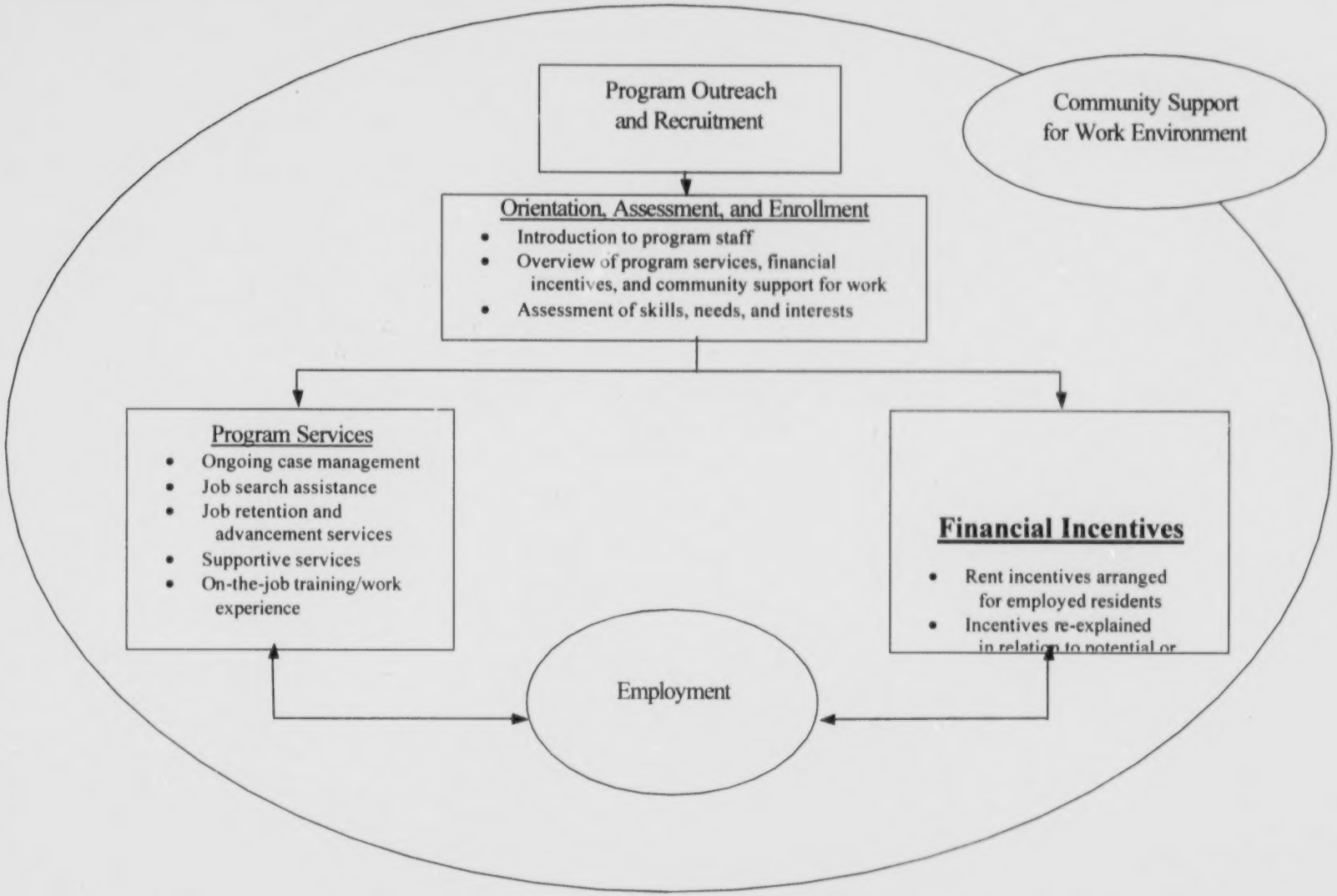
Although the specific services delivered vary considerably from site to site, all programs tend to follow a similar overall sequence of activities. Figure 1.2 is a simplified flowchart of this typical sequence.

Outreach and Enrollment. Many methods have been used to inform residents about Jobs-Plus and encourage them to enroll. Public events (such as fairs, revival meetings, and parties) have been used to gain name recognition for the program and to celebrate the availability of Jobs-Plus services in the community. Written materials (fliers, mailings, etc.) have been sent or distributed to all households. Almost all staff feel that the most effective method of making the program known in the community is the personal recruitment that occurs when someone involved in the program reaches out to neighbors. When a resident of the development does decide to participate, generally a brief enrollment form is completed, which triggers all subsequent services.

Most sites have experienced slow start-up and some difficulty in recruiting participants. These problems are somewhat surprising; program planners had anticipated that recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) would be highly motivated to join, given the new time limits placed on welfare receipt. Perhaps residents are less aware of the time limits than anticipated, or they may doubt that they actually will be cut off when their time expires. Based on negative experiences with other programs, some residents may doubt that Jobs-Plus really will help them to obtain work. Finally, the slow take-up rate also has been attributed to the absence of financial incentives, which had been highly touted during the initial planning period. Some sites have reported a recent surge in applicants after the rent incentives went into effect.

Orientation. As one of the first contacts with Jobs-Plus, the orientation can play a crucial role in setting the tone for the program as a whole. A full orientation might describe the program and introduce the staff, convey a clear message about the importance of work, market the services available to help participants prepare for work and find a job, and motivate them to take advantage of what Job-Plus has to offer.

Some sites have developed fairly structured and well-organized orientations. Chattanooga, for example, requires that everyone participate in a five-day group orientation program prior to becoming a Jobs-Plus member. Some of the other sites, however, rely on more informal, one-on-one sessions.



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Assessment. Some sites integrate the orientation with the initial assessment that they perform to identify participants' employment skills and interests and their barriers to getting a job. The sites have a very large range in terms of the extent and depth of assessment, from a brief informal conversation to standardized tests and interest batteries. Some staff believe that it is important to uncover and address personal and psychological barriers (such as drug abuse or a criminal record) before the job search can begin. Others put less emphasis on initial assessment prior to job search.

Job Search and Job Club. For most participants, finding a job is the central reason for their involvement in Jobs-Plus. Generally, this is accomplished through independent job search efforts, with guidance from the staff. In fact, none of the Jobs-Plus programs has developed a structured group activity, or job club, that offers a combination of classroom instruction, a supervised phone room, and actual job search. Instead, on-site employment centers provide a locale where participants can meet one-on-one with Jobs-Plus staff or can pursue job leads independently.

Job Development. In most cases, program participants meet with Job Developers for help in finding a job. Without the support of a job club, participants who have little work experience and few contacts in the labor market must rely on staff to help them identify job openings and to coach them through the application process. In some programs, all staff members help to develop and identify job openings. In some cases, Job Developers actually build support for the program by developing relationships with certain employers and convincing them to hire through the program. Sometimes they do this by screening job applicants and helping to match participants with jobs. But beyond the individual connections made with some employers, in general the relationship between the program and the private sector — either as members of the Jobs-Plus collaborative or as program supporters — has not emerged.

Education and Training. Most Jobs-Plus participants want to go to work immediately, rather than participate in education or job skills training. This is consistent with the program's emphasis, which encourages participants to get into the workforce quickly — even in a low-paying job at first — as the best way to become self-sufficient. Nevertheless, some programs have enrolled participants in General Educational Development (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. In some cases, Jobs-Plus staff members refer participants to skills training programs that are already being provided by local contractors. With few exceptions, thus far participation and completion rates have been very low.

Job Retention and Advancement. In the initial stage of Jobs-Plus implementation, most of the sites focused on helping participants to obtain a job, rather than spending resources on retention and reemployment services. Staff and managers at all sites acknowledge that special efforts are now required in this area to help workers adapt to the challenges of working — including the additional costs and demands of working, such as arranging for child care and transportation. Beyond this, some residents need help with the emotional and cultural role shifts that they experience as workers. Successful workers also need help in seeking raises and considering career advancement opportunities that will move them closer to economic self-sufficiency. Finally, many workers need help finding a new job if they lose their initial job.

Financial Incentives to Work

Traditionally, public housing residents have faced significant financial disincentives to work. Housing authorities have computed rent based on a percentage (usually 30 percent) of the household's income. Thus, one's rent increases as income grows. For those receiving welfare, higher earnings may cause a reduction in those benefits — a possibility reduced but not eliminated by the fact that most states have adopted new rules that allow TANF recipients to keep more of their welfare benefits when they work. In addition, these recipients still face time limits, at which point their benefits may cease entirely.

According to the design of Jobs-Plus, the rent incentives component will help provide the extra boost that residents need to seek and maintain work. Each Jobs-Plus collaborative has designed its own package of rent incentives to "make work pay." Approvals of the financial incentives were long delayed due to federal funding concerns, but all sites have now received approval for their plans, and implementation is under way in most places.[2]

Community Support for Work

The third component of Jobs-Plus aims to increase community support for work among and on behalf of residents by:

- Tapping into and strengthening existing social networks to gain their cooperation in supporting residents' efforts to work;
- Building new connections with individuals who can support the residents' efforts to learn about job opportunities or support their employment efforts in other ways;
- Providing resources and training to help residents support each other as workers; and
- Making institutional changes that make it easier for residents to sustain a working lifestyle.

Implementation of the community support for work component is least developed to date, in part because such strategies are not well developed and the concept itself is imprecise. However, this component may be the most innovative aspect of Jobs-Plus. Recently, technical assistance has been provided to program staff by MDRC, and good progress is anticipated in the next few months. Examples of some early efforts include:

- Dayton's Building Captain system, which is intended to establish a source of information about Jobs-Plus and employability development in every building

[2]The Quality of Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 requires all housing authorities to develop rent reforms that will reduce the work disincentives facing residents under current rules. These changes took effect in late 1999. Thus, the experience of Jobs-Plus sites will be of broad relevance. MDRC will issue a special report on this topic in early 2001.

- St. Paul's Asset Mapping Survey, which was conducted to identify barriers to work and solutions that the residents, themselves, can develop
- Chattanooga's revivals and training graduation ceremonies, which celebrate the value of work in the community
- Baltimore's Recognition Board, which showcases the accomplishments of Jobs-Plus participants
- Support groups used in Chattanooga by the Tubman Group and by Certified Nursing Assistant trainees to help one another meet personal challenges and master course content
- Quarterly support group meetings hosted by the Wilder Foundation for Mt. Airy's in-home child care providers in St. Paul
- Expanded hours of service at St. Paul's Public Housing Agency and the Melissa Bass Day Care Center in Dayton to accommodate working families
- On-site services to make access easier for working families, including on-site welfare workers in St. Paul, Los Angeles, and Chattanooga; health screening and referral by Vision for Health in Baltimore; and Job Developers from Los Angeles's Employment Development Department and Job Developers/Job Coaches paid for by Chattanooga's Private Industry Council
- Seattle's Community Shares, a service exchange system based on a model promoted by the Time Dollar Institute in Washington, D.C., which enables participants to receive credit for contributing services to others (such as child care, home repair, transportation, and tutoring)

Future Implementation Research

MDRC has a broad, multifaceted approach to studying the operation and impact of Jobs-Plus, and future reports will extend the work begun here. Three questions for further implementation research include:

- **How do the sites implement and integrate financial incentives and community support for work?** During the first year or two of operation, the Jobs-Plus program operators focused on recruiting residents and offering them a package of employment and training services. This service-focused strategy is evident in the program implementation chapters that follow. More recently, efforts are under way to develop the community supports for work and to implement the financial incentives. By the end of this calendar year, all three components should be operational in all sites. Future research will be able to provide fuller descriptions of these components and will examine whether these important parts of the Jobs-Plus model are mutually reinforcing and well coordinated.

- **How do the residents respond to what's offered by Jobs-Plus?** At present, sites have a limited capacity to track participation across components. And although sites are now trying to develop an automated Management Information System (MIS), few of them have it in place at this time. Thus, it is difficult for them to determine which subgroups have participated in Jobs-Plus in the highest proportions. In the coming months, the field research will study this question and will examine why certain subgroups have been more drawn to the program in its early stages. Future research will compare the advantages and disadvantages of certain strategies used to recruit and serve all residents and relevant subgroups.

- **What are the most feasible implementation strategies and the best practices?** Future research will compare and contrast the approaches used by different Jobs-Plus sites. As we examine the tradeoffs, future research will point to the most feasible and most effective approaches. Descriptions and analyses of the strategies that the Jobs-Plus sites adopt, and insights into the tradeoffs of alternative approaches, can provide housing authorities nationwide with useful guidance on a variety of operational questions that they undoubtedly will confront.

In summary, this working paper provides a snapshot of current program operations. Local program operators are working hard to expand and strengthen their Jobs-Plus programs, especially in terms of more fully developing the community support for work component, implementing financial incentives, reaching their hard-to-serve clients, and developing an MIS tracking system. As described in Figure 1.3, future research will update the information provided in these chapters and will track the progress of full-scale implementation of Jobs-Plus.

Figure 1.3

Future Research

- ***Mature programs rather than start-up operations will be studied.*** Currently, most of the programs are operating on a small scale, so their capacity to serve all working-age residents is unknown.
- ***Future publications will be based on cross-site comparisons.*** Rather than focusing on one site at a time, future reports will examine cross-site issues.
- ***Future reports will use additional data sources.*** While these chapters draw primarily on the work of our field researchers, future reports will be based on surveys conducted with residents (at baseline and at follow-up) and administrative records data.
- ***The comparison sites will be used.*** Future reports will incorporate data drawn from the comparison developments as well as the Jobs-Plus demonstration sites. This comparison will document whether Jobs-Plus participants receive services, incentives, and supports that amount to a "treatment" which differs substantially from what is normally available, as seen at the comparison sites.
- ***Subgroup analysis will be possible in future reports.*** Future research will compare the advantages and disadvantages of certain strategies used to recruit and serve all residents and relevant subgroups.

Chapter 2

Jobs-Plus in Baltimore

Linda Kaljee
with
George Mitchell[3]

Program Highlights

Jobs-Plus in Baltimore has been operating at the Gilmor Homes Housing Development in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of West Baltimore since April 1998, when its office opened and program intake began. Several of the staff members, who work out of this office, including the Jobs-Plus Project Director, have been with the program since its inception or its early stages. The office, which consists of two remodeled apartment units, is across from a satellite branch of Vision for Health. This service provider and Jobs-Plus collaborative member offers a variety of health-related services, including referrals to substance abuse treatment programs, to Gilmor Homes residents.

The program has made a number of different efforts to create jobs and internships for residents. Staff includes two Resident Aides who are involved in the community as officers of the Resident Council, and a Community Service Worker, responsible for program outreach, who is also a resident. Two program Intake Workers, one on-site and the other working out of the Baltimore Empowerment Zone office, are former residents.

In addition, using Jobs-Plus and other funds, the program has the capacity to place a sizable number of residents in work experience slots with collaborative member organizations or in subsidized employment with private companies for transitional jobs that can lead to permanent positions. Through the efforts of Jobs-Plus, a group of young adult residents will be participating in the federally funded AmeriCorps on-the-job training and educational program. Baltimore has also established special job development efforts for young adults.

A Case Manager works individually with Jobs-Plus enrollees on assessing their readiness for employment. She is experimenting with a system of using the assessment process to help enrollees focus on one or two problems to address so that they will experience some early success in making changes to improve their employability. As a culmination of the assessment process, the Case Manager and the enrollee develop a plan that specifies the enrollee's goals for participation. Options available to residents in Baltimore include several special job readiness training programs and educational and job skills training programs, although so far few participants have enrolled. The program's two Job Developers are available to help participants with job searches. They also provide informal guidance on job readiness issues. By making referrals to Vision for

[3]We would like to acknowledge the time and assistance we received from the Jobs-Plus staff at Gilmor Homes. In particular, we thank Evalena Frisby, Susan Laster, Jaye Allan, Norita Johnson, Gloria Gantt-Chestnut, and Loretta Woodson. In addition, we thank the representatives of the collaborative members who assisted us in our efforts. We extend a special thanks to Wanda Woodward, Director of the Jobs-Plus program at Gilmor Homes, and Daniel Grulich, Senior Operations Associate of MDRC, for reading and commenting on previous drafts of the report.

Health a routine part of participation for many residents, Baltimore has recognized the extent to which substance abuse is a barrier to employment at Gilmor Homes.

For its financial incentive component, Baltimore has proposed a plan of reducing the percentage of countable income used to calculate working families' rent from the traditional 30 percent to 20 percent, although consideration is being given to dropping the percentage still further to 10 percent. The plan also allows more than one adult in a household to take advantage of the rent incentives, as long as these additional household members are Jobs-Plus participants.

The Housing Development and Its Population

Sandtown-Winchester, the neighborhood in which Gilmor Homes is located, is itself within the Empowerment Zone and in addition has received monies from various private organizations, such as Enterprise Foundation and Habitat for Humanity, for revitalization efforts. Over the past 10 years, various programs have helped residents of the neighborhood get more access to health, social services, and opportunities for home ownership. Despite these efforts, many homes remain boarded up, and the neighborhood's infrastructure of grocery stores, banks, and other resources is limited.

Gilmor Homes is a low-rise brick development built in 1942. It encompasses 564 one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. In the past year, the development has undergone some renovation work including new roof structures on all the buildings and new windows for each unit.

As of June 1999, 310 households (55 percent of total households) included at least one work-eligible member, and there were 151 "employed households" (26.8 percent of all households), including four reporting "self-employment." As of the same date, program reports show that 156 households (27.6 percent of the total) described themselves as receiving TANF.

Program Infrastructure

Facilities

The Jobs-Plus office occupies two contiguous apartment units in Gilmor Homes. Two other service providers, both members of the Jobs-Plus collaborative, have opened offices nearby: Vision for Health is immediately across the street from the Jobs-Plus office, and Goodwill Industries offices are approximately a block away. In addition, the program plans to open another new office, to be called the Resident Empowerment Center, which will be used by the Community Development Specialist and Outreach Worker.

Staff

With the exception of a recently hired Case Manager and Assistant Job Developer, the Gilmor Homes Jobs-Plus staff has remained relatively stable for the past two years. A Project Director whose role includes communicating with collaborative partners, working with program providers, and coordinating logistics for implementing programs, heads the staff. The Project Director, who joined the Jobs-Plus project when planning began in September 1997, is an employee of the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC).

A Community Development Specialist, on board since November 1997, is in charge of recruitment. She also works with residents as coordinator of the program's Leadership Team, the group formed to oversee Jobs-Plus. In this role, she received technical assistance from The Empowerment Network (TEN), a national technical assistance provider whose services are arranged through MDRC. The Leadership Team, which gives residents opportunities to develop community outreach and leadership skills, is a mechanism for residents to work collaboratively with the Jobs-Plus staff and to promote the Jobs-Plus program to the wider community.

The Community Service Worker, a Gilmor Homes resident and member of the Leadership Team, conducts outreach to inform residents about Jobs-Plus and the various programs associated with it. She also helps to organize residents. She has developed and produced a monthly newsletter to inform residents about programs and activities available through Jobs-Plus. She was hired in the program as a Resident Aide in November 1998 and promoted to her current position in June 1999.

An Intake Worker, a former resident who has also been with the program since November 1998, registers program participants on-site and schedules appointments for them to meet with the Case Manager. A second Intake Worker, also a former resident, can register participants at the local office for Baltimore's Empowerment Zone. The Case Manager, hired in August 1999, is responsible for assessing participants both as they enter the program and as they move through it. In addition, she works with participants to identify and address their needs for support services.

The program's job development responsibilities are shared by its Job Developer, who joined the program in November 1998, and an Assistant Job Developer — a position that was filled by a staff member who was hired in August 1999 but who recently resigned. Until her resignation, both staff members worked with participants in job search efforts — for example, helping them to answer newspaper ads and make cold calls — and refer them to job fairs and group interviews. The Job Developer focused on residents above the age of 24, while the Assistant Job Developer worked with younger residents. The Job Developer, who is employed through the Office of Employment Development (OED), also conducts outreach to potential employers. The Assistant Job Developer was paid with U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Drug Elimination grant funds.

An Office Manager is in charge of day-to-day program operations, including answering phones, data entry, and word processing. She is employed through HABC and has been working with Jobs-Plus since May 1998.

Both the President and Vice President of the Resident Council serve the program as Resident Aides. (In addition, the Vice President is currently working at the on-site Vision for Health program.) They help to link Jobs-Plus to the Resident Council and are also engaged in program outreach.

Jobs-Plus also arranges for residents to serve as Resident Aides with various other collaborative member organizations. These positions provide training opportunities and are a means of maintaining contact between Jobs-Plus and other agencies.

Program Flow

Gilmor Homes residents move through several stages as Jobs-Plus participants. These include recruitment; intake; general assessment; health assessment; participation in various job readiness, educational, and training programs and in temporary paid work experience activities; job search; and continued contact with Jobs-Plus staff for retention and advancement services. In addition, staff works with participants in an ongoing process of addressing needs for support services. If a resident does not complete an activity or continue with a particular job, she will work with the Case Manager to reassess plans and goals and in some cases will be guided to take another path. The following sections contain detailed descriptions of the program elements that were mentioned above.

Recruitment

The residents of Gilmor Homes, and in particular the members of the Resident Council, have been involved with the Baltimore Jobs-Plus program since its early stages of development. These residents worked with the staff at HABC on the Jobs-Plus application, and they have sat on the collaborative Board since its inception.

While early resident involvement has been a positive feature of the program, it has not been enough to guarantee resident participation. Residents observe that the development has a history of programs that "come and go" and that as a result they have had some skepticism about the staying power of Jobs-Plus. Continued visibility of the program and staff, including residents hired as Resident Aides, Intake Workers, and Outreach Workers, has reduced the skepticism of many residents. This change is reflected in the level of comfort that residents apparently feel both in the Jobs-Plus office and at Vision for Health. One indication of this comfort level is that a number of residents drop by the offices even if they are not immediately in search of services.

Also very likely reflecting the growing visibility of the program, participation has increased. As shown in Table 2.1, as of December 31, 1999, 282 residents were registered in Jobs-Plus.

Table 2.1

Jobs-Plus in Baltimore: Gilmor Homes

Resident Participation in Jobs-Plus (Through December 1999)

Program/Service or Activity	Total Participants
Work-eligible households	366
Residents registered in Jobs-Plus	282
Job search attempts	397
Education programs	41
Skills training programs	73
Job placements	133

SOURCE: Baltimore Jobs-Plus staff reports.

Jobs-Plus staff and collaborative members have used a number of recruitment strategies. One has been a social gathering. When the Jobs-Plus on-site office opened in April 1998, an open house was held to mark the occasion. The resident Leadership Team assisted in the organization of the event and in the presentation of the program. An open house was also held for the opening of the on-site Vision for Health office in February 1999, and another was held in September 1999, when Goodwill Industries opened its office. These events give residents an opportunity to meet with Jobs-Plus staff and collaborative members and to learn about the program.

Other efforts to inform residents through social gatherings have included a fair and raffle held in September 1998 to promote GED and adult literacy classes offered by Baltimore City Community College. The fair was held at a field across from Gilmor Homes, in an area that is not easily visible from most of the development. Despite the distribution of flyers both door-to-door and through the local elementary school, few residents attended the event. While a December 1998 Kwanzaa celebration was considered to be more successful than the fair, again, only about 15 residents other than the Jobs-Plus staff participated in the event.

Besides social events, the primary strategies for recruiting residents into the program are written materials — for example, flyers and information included in the newsletter produced by the Leadership Team — and word-of-mouth communications. Residents who are employed by Jobs-Plus, members of the Leadership Team, and program participants all talk informally with other residents about the availability of education, training, and employment programs through Jobs-Plus. The Community Service Worker believes that this one-on-one contact is the program's most effective recruitment strategy. Especially as the number of participants has grown, more residents have been available to recruit their neighbors into the program.

As noted previously, a primary responsibility of the Leadership Team is to promote Jobs-Plus to Gilmor residents. One of the challenges of fulfilling this responsibility has been the fluctuation in the team's membership. When the Leadership Team was originally organized, before the Jobs-Plus office was opened, it had eight members. However, once several of these residents found jobs, it became increasingly difficult for them to participate in the team's meetings and other activities. In fact, the group has not met since December 1999.

Intake

Two former Gilmor Homes residents serve as program intake workers. One works on-site, while the other is based at the Self-Motivated People's Community Village Center, the local office for Empower Baltimore Management Corporation, an organization created to manage Empowerment Zone activities and finances. Throughout the Empowerment Zones, neighborhood-based coalitions called Village Centers help to link residents to jobs and services.

When a resident comes into the Jobs-Plus office, the initial intake process includes completion of a registration form, which focuses on basic information such as date of birth, household size, education, and employment history, and a capacity sheet, which asks for information on the enrollee's skills. Once these are completed, the Intake Worker sets up an appointment for the resident to meet with the Case Manager.

The intake worker outstationed at the Self-Motivated People's Community Village Center follows similar procedures. She notes that some residents who have come through the

Village Center say that even though it may be slightly less convenient, they are more comfortable with this off-site location. They have expressed concern about the connection between Jobs-Plus and HABC. Concerns center on the confidentiality of information at the Jobs-Plus office, especially whether seeking substance abuse treatment through Jobs-Plus might affect someone's ability to keep housing, since substance abuse could be grounds for eviction. Similar concerns have been raised about confidentiality of information at Vision for Health.

The Baltimore City Department of Social Services (DSS) recognizes both Jobs-Plus and the Village Center as vendors, and official policy is that recipients of public assistance through DSS have the option of choosing either vendor. In a negotiation that in theory should have increased the likelihood that Jobs-Plus would become the vendor for Gilmor residents, the program came to an understanding with DSS that Gilmor residents would at least be initially referred to the program. However, for several months after the opening of the Jobs-Plus office, DSS caseworkers were not recognizing Jobs-Plus as a vendor, and thus were not referring Gilmor residents to the program. As a result, some residents were first sent to Village Center and from there to Jobs-Plus, leaving them frustrated and confused. More recently, this problem seems to have been resolved, and Gilmor residents now have the option of going to Jobs-Plus directly from the housing development or through the Village Center.

Assessment

Initially, the primary means of assessing Jobs-Plus enrollees was through a special case management program, which is based on the Pathways program, a well-regarded welfare-to-work program based in Chicago. Under this system, Jobs-Plus enrollees who are TANF recipients met initially with one staff member, who worked with them to specify their current situations, goals, and what they needed to do in order to reach those goals. One tool used in the assessment was an "incremental ladder" — a diagram that the enrollee filled out to identify what skills and accomplishments she already had acquired that would help her become self-sufficient. Based on that information about how far she had progressed on the ladder, activities were selected that she judged would help her chart her path to self-sufficiency and success.

While both staff and residents considered certain elements of Pathways fairly successful, for a number of reasons it is being phased out (see the section on Case Management). The program's new Case Manager, hired in July 1999, is revamping the assessment system. Her approach involves at least two initial meetings with each client to review areas of the client's life that might affect her ability to find and keep jobs. Clients are assessed in the following areas: economics (debt and money management); employment (career goals, vocational training, education); literacy (need for remedial education, pre-GED or GED classes); social (adult relations, planning skills, education and school performance, involvement in the criminal justice system); child care; transportation; abuse and crisis issues (child abuse, adult/spousal abuse, substance abuse; immediate lack of food, clothing, medical care, and/or housing); and physical and mental health issues.

The Case Manager prepares an assessment that highlights at least three presenting issues. She then works with the client on selecting one of them to address immediately. The approach is intended to help the client quickly experience some positive results or feedback that then provides the impetus to work on more intermediate and long-term goals.

Based on the assessments, the Case Manager helps clients decide which programs and activities best meet their needs and their goals. Options include participation in job readiness programs, educational and training programs, participation in paid work experience activities, or job search efforts. If an individual is ready for job search, she will be referred to one of the Job Developers (see the section on Job Search). As the culmination of the assessment, the client signs a contract for Jobs-Plus participation, which specifies responsibilities for the enrollee and for the program.

Health Assessment

As part of her assessment work with clients, the Case Manager determines whether they should be referred to Vision for Health. An organization that participates in the Jobs-Plus collaborative, Vision for Health opened its office at Gilmor Homes on February 9, 1999. (Vision for Health also operates an office elsewhere in Sandtown-Winchester, and before the Gilmor Homes office opened, this facility served residents.) The reason why health assessment is included as a regular part of Jobs-Plus in Baltimore is that health needs are a primary reason why many individuals are unable to work or stay employed. For example, drug abuse is a major obstacle to work in Sandtown-Winchester; even nonabusers often face problems as a result of abuse in their families or households.

The Vision for Health program does help residents address substance abuse problems. However, even when residents reach a point of seeking treatment, bureaucratic constraints and an insufficient number of spaces in treatment programs often prevent them from getting care. In addition, some women are likely to avoid inpatient services for fear of losing custody of their children while they are in treatment.

The program uses a variety of recruitment strategies to increase awareness of its services among residents. Every week, Vision for Health staff make door-to-door distributions of flyers that list their hours and services. Recently, staff began holding open houses every other Tuesday. Residents who attend these events can enroll in the program and will be given both an overall assessment and a free blood pressure screening.

As in Jobs-Plus, word-of-mouth referral is also an important recruitment strategy for Vision for Health. As noted, the Vision Aide is a long-time resident of Gilmor Homes and thus can promote the service in conversations with neighbors. Vision for Health staff work with the Jobs-Plus staff to invite residents who have already come through Jobs-Plus to use its health referral services. They recognize that health has many dimensions — not only physical but also mental, emotional, and spiritual. The Program Coordinator observes, "a lot of residents need more than just referrals. What they actually need is a whole support system put in place to assist them...." Assessments reflect this holistic view of health. In addition, the assessment process is often not limited to an initial visit, as many residents regularly come by the Vision for Health office to talk to the staff, providing them with ongoing opportunities to identify and address needs. Staff is also committed to making health care more accessible — for example, by helping residents get through the burdensome paperwork associated with getting access to care.

Vision for Health also operates three school-based clinics, including one at Gilmor Elementary School, which is adjacent to the development. Staffed by a registered nurse and nurse practitioner, these clinics are designed to provide in-school care and access to care for

children, to decrease absenteeism, and to monitor students' health and well-being. While the facilities are not limited to Jobs-Plus participants, as residents come through the Jobs-Plus office and are assessed through Vision for Health, they are provided with information about the facilities.

Job Readiness Programs

As described in Table 2.2 and the following list, a number of job readiness programs — covering such activities as résumé writing, interviewing, and help in completing job applications and assessing employment-related strengths and weaknesses — are offered in the community and are available to Jobs-Plus participants. It should be noted, however, that very few participants have used these services.

- **The Center for Mind and Esteem Development (CMED)** has developed a course to build the self-esteem of public housing residents. It is offered as part of the HABC training program Success 2000 (see the Appendix at end of this chapter), and it was also offered to Gilmor residents in the fall/early winter of 1998. The program, which has a "new age" orientation, focuses on helping participants recognize and remove attitudinal and behavioral barriers to employment and create a positive plan of action.

While a number of residents expressed interest in enrolling and attending the course, the only regular attendees were four members of the Jobs-Plus staff, two of whom were Gilmor residents and all of whom were paid to participate. Their feedback on their experience was very positive.

- **STRIVE,** which targets Empowerment Zone neighborhoods, consists of three weeks of intensive training with a two-year post-employment follow-up. Components include assessment of skills and career interests, development of résumés and interviewing skills, and assistance in job search. All newly hired Resident Aides will be required to participate in STRIVE as part of their Jobs-Plus training.

- **Goodwill Industries** is yet another source of job readiness training, as well as job placement and retention services. Goodwill Industries has offered these services in other locations, and some Jobs-Plus participants have taken advantage of them. However, for the Gilmor Homes program the organization is modifying its services, with the changes mainly stimulated by its collaboration with another organization, Women in the Community, based in Alexandria, Virginia. While the overall Goodwill philosophy is that the first step to employment is for participants to focus on and talk about the barriers to their working, the on-site program plans to place a special emphasis on establishing positive social support groups that will encourage trainees to mentor new enrollees.

The on-site project planned to serve 50 women by the end of 1999, but there have been some recruitment difficulties, which staff attribute mainly to

Table 2.2

Jobs-Plus in Baltimore: Gilmor Homes

Availability of and Participation in Job Readiness Programs (Through November 1999)

Provider and Description	Location	Availability	Total Jobs-Plus Participants
Center for Mind and Esteem Development: class focusing on removing attitudinal barriers to employment	off-site, downtown Baltimore	residents and staff of the housing authority	4
STRIVE: classes on skills assessment, job search assistance, and two years post-employment follow-up	off-site	general availability	8
Goodwill Industries and Women in the Community: job readiness training with stress on peer support	off-site and on-site programs	off-site program: general availability on-site program: Gilmor residents only	7
Office of Employment Development: job readiness workshops	currently off-site; on-site services in 1998	general availability	56[a]
Jobs-Plus program: one-time job readiness workshop	St. Gregory's Church, adjacent to Gilmor Homes	Gilmor residents only	16

SOURCE: Interviews with Baltimore Jobs-Plus staff and service providers.

NOTE: [a]Attended at least one session of workshops.

the lack of any stipend beyond regular receipt of social service benefits for participants. In fact, staff find that this lack of financial incentives for participation has been an ongoing problem for all Jobs-Plus employment readiness programs. For the Goodwill program, the Jobs-Plus Project Director has purchased school supplies to be given to the children of the participants, as an incentive for women to enroll.

It also should be noted that there have been some delays in the opening of the on-site Goodwill office due to delays in contracts and Memoranda of Understanding between Goodwill and HABC. These kinds of delays, which have slowed service provision for Health for many collaborative partners, have been frustrating for the partners, Jobs-Plus staff, and residents.

- Another job readiness program consists of classes offered through the local JTPA, the **Office of Employment Development (OED).** Classes were held on-site in 1998, but during that time and subsequently, Gilmor residents have been able to attend classes and training sessions at the OED office located a few miles south of the development.

- **Sandtown Works**, a program offered through Community Building Partnerships (CBP), which predates Jobs-Plus, has so far attracted no Jobs-Plus participants because its six- to eight-week duration was considered too long.

- In June 1999, Jobs-Plus held a **job readiness workshop at St. Gregory's Church,** which is adjacent to Gilmor Homes. The Job Developer for Jobs-Plus facilitated the workshop, which ran from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. Sixteen women participated. Individuals from the following organizations made presentations at the workshop: Center for Mind and Esteem Development, Vision for Health, Sandtown Works, Goodwill Industries, PACE (People Accessing Continuous Employment), and STRIVE. The themes of the presentations included goal setting; positive thinking; barriers to employment, including health barriers; résumé writing; job etiquette; interviewing techniques; budgeting; and "dressing for success."

  While Jobs-Plus staff thought the workshop was fairly successful, there are no immediate plans to hold another one, or to make it a regular event. It should be noted that in conjunction with the workshop, Jobs-Plus staff were conducting interviews with applicants for the Resident Aide positions. This incentive may have been one reason why at least some of the residents attended the workshop, although most applicants stayed for the sessions even after their interviews.

Job Search

If, during assessment, a resident and her Case Manager decide the resident is ready for employment, that person is referred to one of the two Job Developers, who then works with the resident to assess her skills and her employment and life experiences and, in light of that review, helps her clarify her goals. Job Developers also give residents assistance with job readiness techniques, helping them with interviewing skills and etiquette and instructing them on how to

complete job applications — for example, by stressing the importance of completing the application with all the dates and other information requested. In addition, the Job Developers establish and maintain relationships with potential employers, encouraging them to contact Jobs-Plus when they have openings. They inform residents of job opportunities, and they schedule interviews for them with potential employers.

Postings of job openings are available in the Jobs-Plus office. The program has also offered residents opportunities to participate in-group interviews. Recently, for example, participants were encouraged to apply for interviews being held by the United States Postal Service. But because the interviews were not directly accessible by bus route, some residents did not pursue the opportunity. While there is no direct transportation service for Jobs-Plus participants for job searches or interviews, the Jobs-Plus office does provide bus tokens for this purpose.

Education and Training

The Gilmor Homes Jobs-Plus program offers a variety of educational and training opportunities to participants. These include GED and ABE classes, computer training, training for careers with financial institutions and in the hospitality industry, and a number of training courses offered to public housing residents through HABC. As is the case with job readiness programs, small numbers of Jobs-Plus participants have taken advantage of these programs. As of June 1999, 41 individuals were enrolled in them.

Key education and training programs available to residents are described in Table 2.3 and the following list.

- **GED and ABE classes** are offered to Jobs-Plus participants through Baltimore City Community College. These classes were initially held at Gilmor Elementary School, which is directly across the street from Gilmor Homes, but for the fall semester, they were offered at a community center, which is about a mile from the development. To date, the classes have not been well attended; and the GED class was ended when only one student continued to come on a regular basis. Similarly, while 12 residents enrolled in the ABE class, only two residents have completed it. One suggestion from the MDRC Operations Representative was that the site of the classes should be changed from the elementary school to a local college setting such as Coppin State. He believes that residents would feel more positive about taking a class at a college than "sitting in those little elementary school chairs." While the classes were held at the elementary school for convenience for the participants, this is perhaps an instance where a different location might be more attractive.

- The **computer training class,** taught by a former Gilmor Homes resident, met four evenings a week for 12 weeks at Gilmor Elementary School. (Currently it is not being offered because of a change in the circumstances of the resident teacher.) Originally the class was scheduled to last only four weeks, but this time was too brief, since many participants needed to learn basic keyboarding as well

Table 2.3

Jobs-Plus in Baltimore: Gilmor Homes

Availability of and Participation in Education and Training Services (Through November 1999)

Provider and Description	Location	Availability	Total Jobs-Plus Participants
Baltimore City Community College: GED/ABE classes	Gilmor Elementary School, adjacent to Gilmor Homes	Gilmor residents only	3
Jobs-Plus Program: computer training class	Gilmor Elementary School	Gilmor residents only	8
Maryland Center for Art and Technology: advanced training for careers in financial services	off-site, East Baltimore	general availability	0
Marriott Corporation: hospitality industry training program	off-site	general availability	12

SOURCE: Interviews with Baltimore Jobs-Plus staff and service providers.
NOTE: See the Appendix at the end of this chapter for additional programs offered by the housing authority.

as computer operations skills. Enrollees were expected to live in Gilmor Homes and have at least an eighth-grade education. In fact, two of the six to eight students attending the class as of the end of the report period live within a block radius of Gilmor, but not in the development.

The curriculum for the program included instruction in three software packages — Word 97, Excel, and Powerpoint — and on using the Internet. The students used a textbook geared to preparing them to pass the test to become Microsoft-certified. As of the end of the report period, the first class was preparing to take the certification exam. Most students were already employed, but were at least promoted as a result of the training.

Jobs-Plus also offers a number of training programs to Gilmor residents that are available to other residents of public housing, and in some instances to the general public:

- **The Maryland Center for Arts and Technology (MCAT)** provides a 32-week job training and placement program that offers advanced training and placement for careers in financial services. The first 16 weeks of classroom training are followed by an internship with a credit organization. At the completion of the training, full placement support services are available. As of August 1999, no Gilmor residents had entered MCAT. Staff believe that the primary reason for lack of participation is that residents are not paid for the first 16 weeks of training and that another contributing factor is that the program is located in East Baltimore, a distance to travel by public transportation.

- Marriott Corporation offers a citywide hospitality industry training program, **Pathways to Independence,** consisting of two weeks of classroom training followed by four weeks of on-the-job training. Residents who enroll immediately receive benefits, including health and dental insurance and enrollment in a pension plan. As of August 1999, 12 TANF recipients from Jobs-Plus were enrolled.

- A number of employment and training program are available to public housing residents through HABC's **Family Support Services Division,** including its Resident Initiatives. Programs include: Business Development Program; Employment Opportunities Program, Personal Development Training; Pesticide Training Program; Lawn Care Training Program; Groundskeeping Program; Youth Entrepreneur Institute; Learning Centers; People Accessing Continued Employment (PACE); the Step-Up Program (a construction apprenticeship program); the Family Self-Sufficiency Program; and a daycare certification program. Some of these programs are described in the Appendix to this chapter.

Paid Work Experience and Job Creation

Jobs-Plus and other government agencies in Baltimore offer a variety of paid work opportunities for residents of Gilmor Homes. The goal for all these positions is to have residents fill them on a temporary basis, acquire work experience and then move into permanent positions. This process will free up the slots of other residents who need work experience.

Jobs-Plus has developed employment opportunities for residents as Resident Aides and Intake Workers. The Resident Aides and Intake Workers either work at the on-site Jobs-Plus office or are outstationed at various organizations involved in the collaborative. Three residents (or former residents) work on-site, and four off-site. Recently, two of the individuals who were outstationed at collaborative organizations were hired by the outside organization, freeing up those slots for other residents. While generally residents feel that hiring their neighbors is a sign of the program's commitment to the community, concerns have been voiced about confidentiality problems and dual obligations that can result from these arrangements.

In addition to the residents hired by Jobs-Plus, 16 new work experience job slots at collaborative organizations were recently made available through ED/SS funding. Using these funds, HABC will pay salary support for these positions for up to three years. To date, four of the 16 positions have been filled. Again, the goal is to have individuals fill the slots temporarily, and eventually to be hired by the agency, opening up opportunities for more residents.

Jobs-Plus is also in the process of creating subsidized employment opportunities for TANF recipients and noncustodial parents using welfare-to-work funding. There will be four avenues for subsidized employment: health care, human services, retail services, and construction. Participants will receive training and work preparation for six months, followed by subsidized employment in private companies for six months. During this 12-month period, the housing authority (or other partners) will pay participants' salary and benefits. It is anticipated that subsequently the employers will hire the participants as regular employees.

Civic Works, sponsored by the federally funded AmeriCorps program, is an on-the-job training and educational program for young adults between the ages of 17 and 24 years. Sixteen young adults from Gilmor Homes have been recruited to participate in the program and will be engaged in a community service gardening project within the development. In addition, they will work toward obtaining their GED and will qualify for an AmeriCorps scholarship when the training has been completed.

The Baltimore City Department of Public Works has provided 10 full-time training job slots for Gilmor residents enrolled in Jobs-Plus. The department collects and recycles trash, provides services related to water safety and meeting public health standards, and maintains roadways and city-owned buildings. The 10 trainees have been in the positions for over a year.

The program has not stressed entrepreneurship and self-employment. However, one former resident contracted with Jobs-Plus on her own initiative to teach a computer class.

Job Retention and Advancement Services

Although job retention efforts are a key element of the overall Jobs-Plus initiative, they have not yet been fully developed at Gilmor Homes. In particular, the program has not followed through with residents after they find jobs to help them maintain employment, and to acquire the skills and education they need to advance. Under a new system, however, the Job Developers are starting to track and contact employed residents regularly. To facilitate contact, the program generates a monthly report listing participants in job search and program participants who have been placed during that month. For employed participants, the report provides the employer's name, the job title, the hourly wage, whether or not the individual is receiving benefits through that employer, the start date and — if it occurs — an end date. The system also provides a means

of noting follow-up with the individual after she is employed at various incremental periods up to three years, and it codes the participant's type of employment (unsubsidized, subsidized, internship, training job) and reasons why she stopped working (for example, job termination, discharge, relocation, lack of child care).

Support Services

The primary support services provided by the program are access to child care and Vision for Health referral services. (See the section on Vision for Health.) The Case Manager has primary responsibility for connecting clients to child care.

Jobs-Plus works with the Baltimore City Department of Social Services to provide residents with vouchers so that they can obtain child care either through a center or by using in-home care. An on-site child care center at Gilmor Homes, open weekdays from 7:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., can accommodate approximately 80 children in preschool and after-school programs. It does not serve Gilmor residents exclusively but does reserve 30 emergency slots for Jobs-Plus participants, who can use them for up to two weeks while they find permanent daycare for their children. However, these slots have not been used, and the center itself, with 50 children, is underenrolled.

Many residents choose to hire relatives or friends to provide child care. As of September 1999, a new state regulation specifies that any in-home child care provider who receives payment through the Department of Social Services voucher system must have a background check run through Child Protective Services for herself and for everyone residing in the household where the care will take place. This new rule could possibly delay the availability of child care for some individuals, as they wait for the completion of the background checks.

The help with transportation now available through Jobs-Plus consists of bus tokens and referrals for a reverse commuter program. There has been ongoing discussion about the need for directly providing some form of transportation such as van service, because a number of job opportunities are available in counties outside Baltimore City that are not easily accessible by public transportation.

Case Management

As mentioned, until recently Baltimore used a version of the Pathways system for its case management but stopped doing so by the end of 1999. Pathways is a copywrited program, and its director and founder gave technical assistance to Jobs-Plus staff in implementing it. It consists of four components: a monthly employment diary, a monthly group meeting, a software system for tracking, and a system of procedures and protocols.

Jobs-Plus staff began implementing Pathways in November 1998. Staff was given two days of training from Pathways technical advisors just before the program began, in October 1998. The training consisted of an overview of the Pathways system and of decision-making about how the program would be tailored to and implemented by the Jobs-Plus program.

One problem with implementing Pathways was a bottleneck in referring participants to the service. The Department of Social Services was slated to send letters to Gilmor residents who were TANF recipients informing them that they could report to Jobs-Plus to fulfill their TANF participation requirements. The department was then to forward a list of these residents to Jobs-Plus. However, it is unclear to what extent these procedures were followed. Even if they were, Jobs-Plus staff observe that many people do not read their mail or even pick it up regularly. Thus, participants may not have received or read the letters before Jobs-Plus staff contacted them, and their lack of familiarity with the program may have contributed to delays in participation.

Once residents were involved in the program, they had mixed reactions to it. Responses to the Pathways diary activity were quite favorable. The diary is kept by filling out a monthly employability plan, specifying up to four activities that the participant plan to be engaged in for the upcoming month, and the number of hours she will spend on them. Participants generally saw these diaries as an opportunity to "keep a timeframe" and "take one step at a time and feel good about yourself." The diary information is entered into a computer software program. It is capable of generating monthly and cumulative data on participants to assist them and the case managers in tracking their progress, although this feature was never used at Gilmor Homes.

Another component of the Pathways program is a monthly participants' meeting, in which each individual discusses what she has accomplished during the past month and what goals she is setting for the upcoming month. Meetings were held between December 1998 and April 1999, but over that period attendance declined: While there were nine and 11 participants, respectively, at the first two meetings, by the last meeting, only one participant came.

Attendance declined for several reasons. One positive reason for the drop-off is that participants became employed and subsequently were unable to attend daytime meetings. At the March meeting, it was calculated that of 16 participants enrolled in Pathways, at least eight were working. The program then decided to schedule some evening meetings to accommodate working participants. One was held and attracted only a few participants, leading staff to conclude that the turnout did not warrant additional meetings in the evening.

A less positive factor contributing to the decline is that residents apparently felt uncomfortable talking about their personal issues in a group. In particular, if a resident was unable to carry out a plan that she had previously made public, she did not want to return to report this lack of success to the group.

Part of this discomfort may be attributable to the way in which the first two group meetings were structured. The first meeting was a training session run by Pathways advisors. Several people attended as observers, and the meeting was videotaped. The second meeting was also videotaped for training purposes. The combination of these factors made the meeting more of a "production" than an opportunity for participants to share their experiences.

As noted earlier, a Case Manager was hired in July 1999. Just as she has restructured assessment for the program, she is working to develop case management practices to replace the ones used in Pathways.

Financial Incentives

In Baltimore, rent is currently calculated as 30 percent of a public housing resident's income; thus, a resident's rent increases as income increases, often creating a disincentive to work. Although rent is capped at what HUD calls Fair Market Rates for housing in the area, the ceiling rents are set at levels so high that residents rarely earn enough to benefit from the caps.

To address these disincentive problems, Baltimore's financial incentives team developed a plan that reduces the percentage of income charged for rent from 30 to 20 percent, and cuts the ceiling rents in half, thus allowing working families to pay lower rents and keep more of their earned income.

Other than the provisions of reducing the percentage of income that equals rent and lowering ceiling rents, Baltimore's plan contains no other financial features. However, the collaborative and Jobs-Plus staff is seeking and providing services for residents that will help reduce the additional costs associated with working, such as enhanced child care subsidies, health insurance for working residents, and help with transportation costs. The housing authority has also waived a part of current lease agreements to allow an additional adult to be added to the lease if she signs up for Jobs-Plus. This adult will be able to take advantage of the rent incentives.

To become eligible for financial incentives, residents must complete Jobs-Plus orientation and assessment and sign a Jobs-Plus contract. As soon as participants become employed, they are eligible to receive financial incentives, without fulfilling any additional requirements, for as long as they keep their jobs.

The site submitted its financial incentives plan to HUD in May 1999. As of February 2000, the plan received official approval from Baltimore's housing authority and HUD authorization. Currently, the incentives team has requested a modification of the plan that would further lower the percentage of income charged for rent and establish an escrow account to set aside a portion of the rent as savings for working residents and for nonworking families who begin a community service assignment. These changes would offer residents a stronger incentive to begin and continue working.

If the work incentives successfully increase employment among residents and increase rent revenues for the housing authority, Baltimore City Housing Authority will consider extending them beyond the demonstration period and, possibly, adopting the rent structure as a long-term policy for Gilmor Homes and other housing developments in the city.

Community Support for Work

Community support for work, which entails strengthening resident social networks and changing institutions to facilitate work, has been the least developed component of Jobs-Plus at Gilmor Homes. Until quite recently, there has been some confusion about what kind of Jobs-Plus activities can be considered as part of a community support for work effort. Now that the definition of community support for work activities has been clarified, the program is preparing to intensify work in this area. The Resident Empowerment Office, where the Community

Development Specialists' and the Resident Outreach Workers' offices will be located, will serve as a site for organizing community support for work activities.

Although the component is not fully formed, it is worth noting that several current and planned features of the program have the potential to increase social capital at Gilmor Homes. For example, the Goodwill office plans to provide a mechanism for mentoring that will strengthen social networks by connecting employed and job-seeking residents to one another. The Resident Aide job opportunities not only provide residents with work opportunities but also encourage outreach using established social networks.

Jobs-Plus has also been a catalyst for institutional changes that support work. Both Vision for Health and its school clinics are examples of efforts to create community-wide conditions that are conducive to employability. The on-site office provides greater accessibility for residents to health care information and referrals, and the school clinic offers services that decrease absenteeism and the need for parents to miss work. While the emergency child care services at the Gilmor Daycare Center have not yet been used, they are available to workers who need this care because of problems with their regular arrangements. Finally, in a modest way, the Recognition Board, a display area in the Jobs-Plus office, publicly endorses the value of work by listing program participants and their accomplishments such as enrollment in educational and/or training programs and employment.

Future Challenges

As the Baltimore Jobs-Plus program moves well into its second year of implementation, staff confront a number of problems as they work toward the goal of saturation employment for Gilmor Homes. First, residents must overcome a variety of obstacles in their own lives if they are to find and keep jobs. As has been discussed, health issues, in particular substance abuse, are a major concern at Gilmor Homes, and while Vision for Health helps residents solve some of these problems, residents are not always willing or able to get treatment.

Another personal barrier, which is sometimes linked to substance abuse, is lack of self-esteem. While the problem is difficult to diagnose, it can undercut the resident's ability to enroll in training or educational classes, look for employment, and continue with a job.

Many Gilmor residents have limited experience outside the housing development and the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood, and they hesitate to move beyond these boundaries. This lack of experience contributes to poor self-esteem, exacerbating the tendency of some residents to place self-imposed limits on where they go and what they do. One concern has been whether offering services such as Jobs-Plus, Vision for Health, and Goodwill Industries on-site reinforces this isolation. The Director of the Center for Mind and Esteem Development purposely holds his sessions in an office in a high-rise building in downtown Baltimore. He also has incorporated field trips into his program, to allow individuals to experience new places in the city. While so far only four staff members have taken advantage of this opportunity, it may be useful for Jobs-Plus to further promote this approach.

Still another challenge for Jobs-Plus is that because participants have been primarily concerned with obtaining immediate employment, very few of them have enrolled in job

readiness, training, and education programs. The difficulty is that while employment is the program's ultimate goal, individuals with limited skills or a lack of formal education will find it difficult to obtain a job with living wages and benefits. Thus, there need to be more opportunities for residents to combine education and training with employment.

In addition to the kinds of personal barriers just discussed, residents also face some institutional barriers to employment. For example, as noted earlier, lack of transportation to outlying areas limits the job opportunities available to Gilmor residents. Transportation problems can be compounded by a lack of child care for extended hours.

The question remains whether and how Jobs-Plus will affect the residents of Gilmor Homes over the long term. Clearly residents have benefited from the multiple services and programs offered through Jobs-Plus since its inception, but only when the program has reached full maturity will it be possible to determine whether those changes can be sustained.

Appendix

HABC Training and Employment Programs

The following capsule descriptions and Table A.1 present information on employment and training programs offered to participants through the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC).

Lawn Care Training Program

Residents are trained in lawn care maintenance and groundskeeping for a 12-month period. The program is designed to supplement the current maintenance workforce at various sites where residents live. Residents are paid $8.62 per hour for a full-time workweek. Up to 15 residents per year participate in the program.

Pesticide Training Program

This program gives up to 10 residents a year classroom instruction and hands-on training under the supervision of a licensed pesticide applicator and the HABC Special Crews Division of Central Maintenance. At the end of a 13-month training period, residents are eligible to take the Maryland State Certification Test. Residents are paid $6.00 per hour for a 30-hour week. Applicants must be 18 years old, must have a GED or high school diploma, and must have passed the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) at the eighth-grade level. Currently the program is being linked to PACE (see description below) to increase ties to employers. Also, efforts are under way with this program and the Lawn Care Training Program (described above) to set up joint ventures with employers to assist residents in developing their own businesses.

Success 2000/PACE

The Success 2000 training initiative, which itself consists of several different programs, is a joint effort of HABC Resident Initiatives and the Center for Mind and Esteem Development. Initiated in fall 1998, it is available free of charge to HABC residents. The program has three steps. Step 1, the "Personal Empowerment" sequence, is directed by the Center for Mind and Esteem Development and is essentially the same as the self-esteem class that was offered to residents of Gilmor Homes in the fall/winter of 1998.

Step 2, the Employment Opportunities Program, focuses on skills for the computer and medical fields — specifically, Office Computers Operations Specialist, Geriatric Nursing Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, EKG Technician, and Venipuncture and Specimen Collections Technician. Operated through the Baltimore City Community College, it has the capacity to serve up to 100 students. In addition to skills training, students also receive training in life skills and customer relations as well as math and English refresher courses, and they are offered job placement services. Students must have their GED or a high school diploma and must be able to pass the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) at the eighth-grade level.

Step 3 of the program is job placement and is under the auspices of HABC's PACE (People Accessing Continued Employment) program, a new initiative created to expand access to employment for residents of public housing. The first year of this program targets 600 residents.

Table A.1

Jobs-Plus in Baltimore: Gilmor Homes

Residents Enrolled in HABC Resident Initiative Programs, July 1, 1998, to June 30, 1999, for Gilmor Homes and Comparison Sites (Somerset and Perkins)

Development	Lawn Care and Pesticide Training Programs	Success 2000	PACE	Groundskeeping Program	Step-Up Program	Hotel/ Hospitality	Housing Inspection
Somerset	0	1	enrolled: 8 placed: 7	5	2	3	0
Perkins	lawn care: 2 pest control: 1	2	enrolled: 17 placed: 11	5	4	1	1
Gilmor Homes	0	0	enrolled: 5 placed: 4	4	6	3	1

SOURCE: Housing Authority of Baltimore City.

PACE provides employment assistance to residents successfully completing the Employment Opportunities Programs and HABC training programs in pesticide and lawn care training. Another focus is work with the more difficult-to-employ residents. The program includes intensive job readiness training, placement assistance, and post-placement support for up to one year.

PACE operates employment centers and in conjunction with them provides learning centers to link residents to education and jobs. The program is a partnership between the Office of Employment Development (OED) and HABC Family Support Services Division.

For enrollees who seem to need additional assistance, Success 2000 has begun a pilot personal development sequence that focuses on building confidence, self-esteem, and the motivation to pursue employment and self-sufficiency goals.

Groundskeeping Program

This resident employment program, started in partnership with the Department of Social Services, gives 77 residents responsibility for maintaining the grounds at the developments where they live, to free up the maintenance staff for other responsibilities. Residents are paid $6.50 per hour for a minimum 24-hour week and must be receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) to be eligible. The residents are participating in the DSS grant diversion program, which diverts part of the grant to the employer to cover the wages. It was designed to help TCA recipients meet the weekly work requirements for receiving assistance and to gain work experience.

Step-Up Program

The Step-Up Program, established in 1994, offers public housing residents the opportunity to learn about construction trades in a real-world setting. This 12-month program also helps graduates find jobs. The program includes a component that enables residents to learn and work while renovating public housing units. Slots for Step-Up participants were also available at HOPE VI with contractors and subcontractors.

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program

The Family Self-Sufficiency Program enables public housing and Section 8 residents to save money in an escrow account that receives a family's rent increases due to earned income. In turn, the family agrees to pursue specific goals — such as obtaining a GED or enrolling in training — that members must meet to qualify for the escrow money, which can then be used to purchase a home. The program participation period is from two to five years.

Chapter 3

Jobs-Plus in Chattanooga

Linda Persse[4]

Program Highlights

Chattanooga's Jobs-Plus program, located in the Harriet Tubman Homes Development, uses a wide variety of techniques, including systematic canvassing of the housing development, small-group meetings in residents' apartments, and special events, to reach out to prospective enrollees. Program-sponsored community revivals, held intermittently, are designed to engage residents in Jobs-Plus and highlight the value of work.

Another notable feature of the program's front-end activities is a structured five-day orientation. These sessions give participating residents an opportunity to meet with the program's Job Coach and with the Counselors who serve as case managers to Jobs-Plus members. During orientation, residents also complete individual plans, known as Family and Community Enrichment Plans, specifying what they will do as Jobs-Plus members to move toward self-sufficiency. Each orientation is followed by a graduation ceremony that marks a resident's official enrollment into the program.

Four of the 12 Jobs-Plus staff members are outstationed to the program from other agencies, and six are Harriet Tubman Homes residents. Staff, who work out of two well-appointed Jobs-Plus offices in proximity to other services in the housing development, offer participants individualized assistance with job searches, referrals to services, and other help related to finding and keeping jobs.

Some residents have used the option of a one-week employment readiness course that is offered by a group of four Harriet Tubman Homes residents, who have formed their own business to deliver this kind of "soft-skills" training to Jobs-Plus members and others who want and need preparation for the world of work. Although Jobs-Plus stands ready to refer members to various kinds of job training offered in the community, so far the job training that Jobs-Plus members have used is Certified Nursing Assistant preparation and child care training, which have been available on-site. GED classes and computer training are also offered at the housing development. Both members of the Harriet Tubman Homes Group and of the nursing trainees have organized peer support sessions for themselves.

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[4]The author would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of several people in preparing this chapter. First, James Fraser contributed significantly by conducting several interviews and assisting in the preparation of the earliest draft. David Sabir, Project Director, offered information about the overall operations of the initiative, as well as details about specific components. In addition, he assisted with a helpful review of the chapter draft. Other staff, including Clarence Stallion, Jeanette Gaines, Eundre Porter, Monica Moore, Joe Oden, Cassandra Smith, Addie Jackson, Tammy Parker, Alicia Carter, and Mary Morrison, contributed their time to help the author understand the day-to-day operations, achievements, and challenges of Jobs-Plus. Ann Wadley, President of the Resident Management Corporation, offered thoughtful comments that helped to place Jobs-Plus into the context of the Harriet Tubman community. Also, the author thanks several Harriet Tubman residents who shared their experiences with Jobs-Plus anonymously.

Job search help is offered individually rather than in groups. Some job-seekers take advantage of an agreement that the Job Developer has made with selected employers, who have committed to giving interviews to Jobs-Plus applicants and to giving unsuccessful applicants feedback on why they were not hired, which can help them in future interviews.

Chattanooga currently is implementing the HUD regulations that apply to all residents of HUD-funded housing developments who participate in TANF-approved education and training programs. For an 18-month period, the regulations permit Jobs-Plus members to exclude any new earnings from the calculations of their rent. Once this rent freeze has ended, participants would be eligible for additional incentives under a Jobs-Plus incentives plan. In the first stage, which would last 16 months, new income would be factored into rent calculations, but the percentage of income counted would drop from 30 to 10 percent. In the final stage, rent would be calculated at 20 percent of income. The plan includes several other incentives, including an exemption from utility costs beyond those usually covered by the housing authority and a $100 per month income deduction to help cover work-related expenses, such as transportation.

The Housing Development and Its Population

Harriet Tubman Homes is located in a predominantly residential neighborhood approximately 10 to 15 minutes east of downtown Chattanooga. A variety of retail establishments can be found within a 3- to 4-mile radius of the development. Also within this radius are different industrial and commercial sites, such as the Chattanooga Area Rapid Transit Authority (CARTA) service center, a Coca-Cola bottling plant, and a merchandise direct-shipping center, that collectively hire employees with a range of job skills. Several churches, including the Inner-City Ministry, which is just across the street from Harriet Tubman Homes, are located nearby. The development is served by a CARTA bus line.

The development's generally well-maintained 37 acres contain one- and two-story townhouse units arranged in clusters around courtyards. Each unit has a small yard bordered by low fencing. Residents, including children, make good use of the development's community facilities, which include a gymnasium, playground and picnic areas, and offices.

The development contains 420 households, predominantly (97 percent) African-American. Most households — 67 percent — consist of a family with a mother or grandmother and children. The development is home to a fairly large number of disabled and senior citizens, occupying approximately 100 of its newer housing units. Income from wages is the primary source of income for approximately 20 percent of the households.

Program Infrastructure

Jobs-Plus in Chattanooga is directed by a collaborative that comprises well-established and emerging Harriet Tubman Homes resident leaders and senior-level administrative staff of organizations and foundations that are Jobs-Plus partners. A team of 12 staff members, half of whom are Harriet Tubman Homes residents, carries out day-to-day management. In addition, a range of service providers from the community contribute expertise and other resources to the program.

Management

The Harriet Tubman Homes Resident Management Corporation (RMC), a not-for-profit organization comprising elected resident representatives, worked with local agencies to bring Jobs-Plus to the development and has maintained an active role in shaping and implementing the program. The RMC has a strong commitment to resident empowerment in the program. For example, because the RMC believes that residents should be able to exercise control over a neighborhood program — including control over activities of its nonresident staff and service providers — it retains the right to accept or reject proposed Jobs-Plus staff members.

Also consistent with the original RMC expectations for Jobs-Plus, residents hold a majority on its Governance Board, which has management oversight responsibilities for the program. In addition to residents, this 11-member group includes representatives of organizations that are core or mandated members of Jobs-Plus: the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Private Industry Council (PIC), the Chattanooga Local Housing Authority (CHA), and the Lyndhurst and Community Foundations, which have provided resources to Jobs-Plus.[5]

Staff

The Jobs-Plus Executive Director is responsible for day-to-day program management. His past work experience includes assisting the Department of Human Services with the transition from AFDC to TANF and directing a teen pregnancy program at Harriet Tubman Homes. An Administrative Assistant and a Project Coordinator support him. Two Job Developers work throughout the Greater Chattanooga area to locate employment opportunities. They coordinate their job placement efforts closely with the work of a Job Coach, who helps participants prepare for the workplace. Two Community Revitalization Counselors (referred to as "Counselors" in this report) take an active role in Jobs-Plus recruitment. They also serve as case managers, helping participants anticipate and reduce barriers to training and employment.

The remaining four staff members are employed by other agencies that place them full-time at Harriet Tubman Homes. A Case Management Specialist and a Data Clerk are funded by the Department of Human Services for the TANF population. Family and Children's Services, a nonprofit social service agency, provides a Community Organizer, who has taken the lead in developing and implementing the Jobs-Plus Orientation. This person also helps other staff with recruitment and special Jobs-Plus events. Finally, a TANF Case Manager has been outstationed to the program.

The Project Coordinator, the two Counselors, the Job Coach, the Data Clerk, and the Case Management Specialist are all Harriet Tubman Homes residents. It is expected that, over time, resident staff members will assume even more responsibility for Jobs-Plus operations. The program is taking steps that support that change. For example, the Project Coordinator, who is a resident, shares responsibility with the Executive Director for planning and managing meetings. Also, efforts are being made to increase computer literacy of all staff members, including residents.

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[5]The Benwood Foundation also supports Jobs-Plus but is not part of this group.

The brief job descriptions just presented do not convey the full dynamics of day-to-day staff activities. As discussed later, there is considerable overlap and flexibility in duties requiring continual interaction among staff. Welcoming this feature of their jobs, staff believe it enhances their morale and cohesion and promotes the effectiveness of the program.

Jobs-Plus Facilities

The highly visible on-site Jobs-Plus offices and program areas provide a home base that is welcoming to both outside service providers and Harriet Tubman Homes residents. Located in an area of the development known as "services row," the Jobs-Plus offices are situated among buildings that house the RMC, the Tubman Express (an adolescent activity program), and the One Room School of the Hamilton County Board of Education, the site of a computer lab and GED classes. "Services row," well-maintained like all of Harriet Tubman Homes, includes attractive signs that make programs clearly visible to visitors and residents and that offer tangible evidence of efforts to link residents with services.

There are two separate spaces dedicated to Jobs-Plus — two former townhouse units that have been taken off-line (no longer available for residential use) and extensively renovated to accommodate staff and activities. The Jobs-Plus Resources Center is the hub of the initiative. Offices for the Project Director, administrative support staff, and Job Developers are located on its second floor. On the first floor are a reception area and two large rooms, one with desk space for the Job Coach and an area for job readiness and job search activities. It contains a telephone used by participants to pursue job leads, and a computer and printer that can be used for preparing résumés. Connected by sliding doors is a multi-purpose room used for orientation classes, staff meetings, social gatherings, and Jobs-Plus Committee and Board meetings. The connecting doors can be opened during events that require more space. Across the street in the Jobs-Plus Annex are offices for the Community Organizer, the Counselors, the Project Coordinator, the DHS Case Manager, and the Case Management Specialist. All staff have private telephone lines with voice mail, computers in their offices, and readily available printers and copiers. Equipment, offices, and common spaces are well maintained.

Beyond the space set aside exclusively for Jobs-Plus, common areas at Harriet Tubman Homes are available as well. For instance, large events can be scheduled in the development's gymnasium, and outdoor gatherings are held at picnic areas. Overall, there seems to be sufficient space for the current activities and staff, with some capacity for scheduling more activities into the present areas during open time periods.

Program Flow

This section describes how major program activities are sequenced and linked, as well as the strategies and tasks associated with each major activity.

Recruitment

Reaching out to the residents of Harriet Tubman Homes to market Jobs-Plus to them and involve them in its activities has required continual and extensive effort by all staff and many of the partners. Recognizing that residents vary in the types of messages and delivery styles they respond to, staff use a range of recruitment strategies, including door-to-door and face-to-face

outreach, celebratory and informational events, printed fliers and newsletters, and media coverage.

Some of the individual outreach to residents was originally organized as "sector rushes" — spreading the word about Jobs-Plus in one section of Harriet Tubman Homes at a time. All staff members gathered about every other week to cover a targeted section of the development with door-to-door-visits. Focusing on establishing rapport with prospective enrollees, each staff member approached individual residents, stressing how participants would be offered support as well as opportunities to move into training and jobs. The staff were enthusiastic about sector rushes. They felt that the strategy calls for teamwork, an approach promoted by the Project Director, who believes that outreach and recruitment are everyone's job. Aside from educating residents, this approach helped nonresident staff get to know the community. In the words of a Community Organizer, "It gave us a chance to talk to residents one-on-one. It was an icebreaker that put us in their environment." During the sector rushes staff who were also residents tried to establish the credibility of nonresident staff and of Jobs-Plus by emphasizing to their neighbors that all staff were working together, that residents had had input into the planning and design of the initiative, and that they would be continue to be involved during operations.

Other organized activities that give staff a chance to talk with residents are "bashes," involving two or three staff, who meet with two, three, or more residents in the apartment of another resident who agrees to host the event. By attempting to create a relaxed, conversational atmosphere, staff try to engage the residents in a discussion about how Jobs-Plus participation can support their family and community life, while also helping them to move into training and job opportunities. During both these sessions and their door-to-door meetings with residents, staff not only focus on Jobs-Plus but are open to hearing about other needs that residents wish to discuss.

In addition to these individual and small-group recruitment strategies, staff have held a number of special events to heighten the initiatives visibility. For instance, a Grand Opening Celebration for the Jobs-Plus Center attracted between 100 and 150 people. The local media coverage of the event resulted in a newspaper article and televised shots on news programs. Although staff were available to enroll residents, the focus was on inviting residents to join in a festivity that acknowledged a new resource for the community. The week following the grand opening was designated as Jobs-Plus Week, with daily social and recreational activities to draw residents to the Jobs-Plus Center. Other intermittent events included community revivals jointly sponsored by staff and the RMC, with guest speakers invited to educate and motivate residents.

To further help saturate the Harriet Tubman Homes community with information about Jobs-Plus, written materials are distributed. A newsletter, Evolution, highlights Jobs-Plus services and opportunities and publicizes success stories about participants. During the nine months since the newsletter was started, three issues have been published and delivered to every Harriet Tubman Homes household. Other written materials such as fliers have been passed out door-to-door and placed on car windshields. Now that Jobs-Plus has a sizable list of residents who have participated in events, the program prints each persons name on fliers and mailings to personalize the contact. In another media effort, a local radio station airs a Jobs-Plus weekly program that includes basic information, highlights of activities, and individual accomplishments of members. Radio public service announcements stress such messages as "If you've thought of

making a change — now's the time." (In an effort to raise awareness of Jobs-Plus among prospective employers, the radio program also targets this audience.)

The RMC continually promotes Jobs-Plus activities at its regular meetings. CHA management, TANF case managers, and representatives of other agencies who interact with Harriet Tubman Homes residents also refer them to Jobs-Plus as part of their interventions to help them resolve personal issues and move toward self-sufficiency.

At the end of each week, the Counselors compile a list of residents referred and self-referred to Jobs-Plus. They initiate a personal contact with everyone to answer questions and to invite them to attend the orientation class. The Counselor helps residents to locate child care if they say they need it to attend the session. Typically they turn to the on-site service that provides babysitting while parents are in Jobs-Plus activities.

Orientation and Enrollment

Orientation is a 10-hour program spread over five days. In order to respond quickly to the interest expressed by any residents, a new orientation session starts every Monday. About 40 regular sessions and 10 specially scheduled evening or weekend sessions[6] have been held, with participation ranging from one to about eight residents. Although the Community Organizer has the role of "orientation leader," a team approach involves other staff in delivering different components of the curriculum.

At the outset of orientation, the residents, with the help of the Counselor assigned to them, complete an enrollment form and a "Gifts, Abilities, and Skills Survey." The survey encourages participants to think about skills they already have that could lead to jobs directly, those that could be enhanced or acquired, and those that they could teach to others. The extensive checklist includes skills and abilities as diverse as operating office equipment, repairing cars, caring for children, preparing food and catering, and craft activities.

Next, staff proceed through the orientation curriculum. In addition to informing participants about Jobs-Plus, the five areas the curriculum covers are goal-setting, time management, completion of job applications and a résumé, job interviewing skills, and dressing appropriately for the workplace. Utilizing an informal format that includes group discussion and focused exercises, the orientation leader addresses issues of motivation and responsibility and encourages participants to set goals and identify immediate and future activities to help reach them.

In an attempt to encourage orientation participants to move into active job readiness, training, or job search, the curriculum was recently modified to increase the interaction between participants and the Job Coach by having her facilitate the last two class sessions. During one of them, she encouraged residents to think about the importance of first impressions that people make on each other and to apply these ideas to job interviews and workplace behaviors. A videotape of several job interview scenarios gave residents an opportunity to observe effective and ineffective interviewing techniques. A homework assignment that includes thinking through answers to a list of 20 typical interview questions was to be completed between the two days.

[6]Some of the special sessions, which have tended to be for working participants, who need less information, have been held for fewer than 10 hours.

On her second day with the participants, each of them completed a videotaped mock interview, drawing on the 20 questions. It was understood that the Job Coach would arrange to review the tape with each participant after the end of the Orientation, thus creating a potential bridge to the resident's involvement in the Job Club.

Near the end of orientation, the Counselors become active again by working with participants to complete a "Family and Community Enrichment Plan" (FACEP). On this form residents specify what they will do to move toward self-sufficiency. Options include Jobs-Plus-sponsored activities such as enrolling in GED classes, working on job readiness skills, beginning a job training or entrepreneurial training program, and/or using non-Jobs-Plus services such as self-help resources or an independent job search. While working with participants on the FACEP, the Counselors stress a point that was made throughout the orientation — that when people are engaged in constructive activities such as job training and work, they bring resources into the community. The resources are not limited to earnings but also encompass residents' ability to serve as positive role models and to demonstrate that Harriet Tubman Homes is a community where people work and engage in other productive activities.

The completion of orientation is marked by a graduation ceremony during which certificates and Jobs-Plus T-shirts are awarded. Thus far, 40 ceremonies have been held. The day of the ceremony was recently changed from the last class session on Friday to the following Monday. The change was made to try to move members immediately into Job Club or job search activities on graduation day by capitalizing on the enthusiasm generated by the special event.

It should be noted that residents are not considered enrolled in Jobs-Plus until they complete orientation. Typically, more than 75 percent of orientation participants do graduate. As shown in Table 3.1, as of November 30, 1999, 155 residents had graduated and became members of Jobs-Plus.

Besides presenting information on participation in orientation, Table 3.1 gives an overview of all other main program components and services along with participation statistics for each. As is the case for orientation participation statistics, statistics for these other activities denote the total number of Jobs-Plus members served through November 30, 1999.

Job Preparation Assistance

Following graduation from orientation, members vary in their job-seeking activities. Some pursue job opportunities on their own. Others become involved with training programs, work with Job Developers, or participate in a range of services offered through the Job Club. Yet others decide to put off job training and looking for a job for personal reasons — often, as some staff members assert and as discussed further in the concluding section of this report, because they lack confidence about entering the workplace or are skeptical about how much Jobs-Plus can help them change their lives for the better. The remainder of this section describes the array of job readiness, search, entrepreneurial, and placement activities implemented by Jobs-Plus.

Table 3.1

Jobs-Plus in Chattanooga: Harriet Tubman Homes

Resident Participation in Education and Training Services (Through November 1999)

Provider	Program/Services	Location	Duration of Service	Serves Members Only?	Total Jobs-Plus Participants
Jobs-Plus staff	Jobs-Plus Orientation: required for Jobs-Plus membership	on-site	1 week, 2 hrs/day	yes	155
Jobs-Plus staff	Job Club/Job Search	on-site	ongoing	yes	165[a]
Jobs-Plus staff	Retention and advancement support	on-site or at work	ongoing	yes	98
Hamilton County Board of Education	GED: preparation for high school equivalency exam	on-site	ongoing; based on individual need	yes:evening class no: daytime class	67
Kandy Kastle	Jobs skills training: Child Care Center Management	on-site on-the-job	ongoing	yes	1
Chattanooga State CC	Jobs skills training: Child Care Center Management	community college	2-year program	yes	1
Chattanooga State CC	Jobs skills training: Early Childhood Development	on-site	6 weeks	yes	8
Urban League of Greater Chattanooga	Jobs skills training: Office Technology	Urban League	8 weeks	no	1
Academy of Allied Health	Certified Nursing Assistance Training: job skills, money management, workplace issues	on-site	4-5 weeks	yes	16
Hamilton County Board of Education	Computer literacy	on-site	4 weeks	no: any resident of Harriet Tubman Homes	4

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Provider	Program/Services	Location	Duration of Service	Serves Members Only?	Total Jobs-Plus Participants
Success by Design	Entrepreneurial Training: How to start and maintain own business; create business plans and assist with implementation; training to start soft-skills training program	on-site	15 weeks	yes: to receive all services	3
Keenan Institute	Entrepreneurial training for the Tubman Group	University of Tennessee	15 weeks	yes	7
University of Tennessee	Entrepreneurial training for the Tubman Group	University of Tennessee	ongoing	yes	4
Tubman Group	Soft-skills training: preparation for the workplace	University of Tennessee	1 week	yes	21

SOURCE: Interviews with Jobs-Plus staff and service providers.

NOTE: [a]Unduplicated count.

Most job preparation activities occur through the Job Club, located in the Jobs-Plus Resources Center. The Job Coach coordinates activities. Because she is herself a Harriet Tubman Homes resident, she is able to serve as a role model for participants.

Unlike some job clubs, participation in this one does not mean group sessions that follow a set curriculum or guidelines. Instead, the Job Club is a place where members can work at their own pace, individually, with staff, or in groups of two or three, utilizing job readiness materials that were organized by the Job Coach into modules. These modules are based on workbook chapters taken from *The Choice Is Yours* (Richard Fuchs and Paul Walker, The Prudential, 1989). Coming to the Resource Center on a drop-in basis, members decide which of the approximately 13 topics might be useful to them. Topics include completing applications and résumés, appropriate dress and behavior, handling stress, relating to employers and co-workers, and establishing a strong support system for work.

The Job Coach encourages members to discuss the topics and complete practice exercises with her. This individualized approach is used because the number of members participating who identify the same need at the same time is usually too small to establish an ongoing group format. Small groups form intermittently. For example, three or four members who were scheduled for job interviews at the same company prepared together for this event.

In additional to the Job Club, a resource for job readiness training is offered for Jobs-Plus members who were Families First (TANF) recipients through a contract between the Tubman Group and the Department of Human Services. The Tubman Group consists of four Harriet Tubman Homes residents who themselves received training and ongoing support to create a soft-skills training program, which then could be provided to others, including Jobs-Plus members. This business was created to serve the dual purposes of offering an important service to the community, while giving the residents who provide the training an opportunity for entrepreneurship. The one-week course covers a wide variety of subjects, including cultural diversity in the workplace, time management, setting employment goals, money management, topics related to workplace behavior, getting support from friends and family, and maintaining health. A further description of the Tubman Group's work is included in the section on entrepreneurial development later in the report.

Education and Training

Jobs-Plus has developed several training activities for members who want to complete basic education or to acquire specific job skills. They are encouraged to consider taking this direction while they are completing the FACEP or later, during their work with the Job Coach. GED classes are available on-site. These classes meet both during the day and in the evening to accommodate people who are already working. Job-Plus has contracted with a former Families First trainer to conduct one of the GED classes for Jobs-Plus members only. In addition, the Hamilton County Board of Education provides GED classes, open to all Tubman residents, in an on-site facility.

Although approximately 67 Jobs-Plus members have participated in ABE and GED classes, no one has yet passed the exams. The Jobs-Plus Executive Director observes that most students start out with very low levels of educational achievement. In his opinion, a number of these students find it overwhelming to handle the homework involved and master all the material

to pass the test when they must also attend to competing responsibilities such as child care. Another factor that he thinks may discourage students is their knowledge that GED attainment will not necessarily lead to a job.

In reviewing instructional practice used in the GED class, the Executive Director has questioned a requirement that students pass a pretest before going on to take the GED exam. In his opinion, some students who fail the pretest may manage to pass the GED exam itself. He plans to meet with the instructor to discuss these concerns.

Besides the GED class, the Board also offers a basic computer skills course that emphasizes skills such as word-processing, developing a résumé, and newsletter writing. To date, four Jobs-Plus members have taken advantage of these classes, which are held on-site at Harriet Tubman Homes in the Hamilton County Board of Education One Room School facility.

Training for specific job skills is also offered. Because many members said they were interested in nursing, a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program was brought on-site. Sixteen participants received CNA certification through the training, and there has been a waiting list for upcoming classes. The training includes job skills and life skills such as managing money and workplace issues. Each class has held a formal graduation ceremony that featured prominent speakers and included friends and family members.

Although additional training opportunities are available to most Jobs-Plus members through the Private Industry Council (PIC), they did not pursue them. Courses include data entry, truck driving, and computer training. While there could have been additional reasons for the lack of interest in PIC courses, staff report that members who want training prefer to attend the CNA classes because they are on-site. In fact, after the waiting list for CNA training developed, members frequently found temporary employment or put their participation on hold until they could begin the classes.

In addition to job training, Jobs-Plus members have an opportunity to learn how to start their own businesses. Working with an established Chattanooga business, Success by Design, Jobs-Plus uses ED/SS funds (a special grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) to offer classes that give participants information on what it takes to start a business. This course has produced three business plans, and two of the three participants are currently applying for their loans.[7]

Job Search and the Use of Job Development

Becoming employed quickly is the goal most members articulate at the end of orientation. Most feel confident that they can obtain a job without any, or with a minimum of, job readiness assistance. Thus, they set out to arrange interviews on their own or use the job search facilities of Jobs-Plus. The Job Coach or Counselor assigned to them talks with them to

[7]Originally about eight people began the training, but only three were Tubman residents; the others were family members or significant others. While all eight received training, a decision was made that help with development of the business plan would be limited to Tubman residents.

confirm they have adequate arrangements for child care and transportation, and provides referrals for assistance when needed. Because there is workspace for job search in the Job Club area of the Resource Center, the Job Coach is available to assist members in preparing applications and getting ready for interviews. As a result, even though a member has refused to participate in regular job readiness activities, some staff support is available for specific needs if requested. As of the end of 1999, the program had recorded 165 visits to the Job Club/Job Search facility. This count includes multiple visits for some individuals.

When members do participate in job readiness and education and training services, the Counselors and Job Coaches serve as screeners, determining when members have eliminated barriers to working, such as lack of transportation and child care, and are otherwise ready for a job interview. At that point members are offered the opportunity to make an appointment with the Job Developer, who can connect them with potential employers. Some of these employers have established agreements with the Job Developer that assure that a Jobs-Plus applicant sent by the program will be interviewed and considered for a position. When they go to interviews with these employers, applicants take a Jobs-Plus Referral Card indicating that they have this status. Following the interview, the employer completes and returns the card to the Job Developer with either a notation that the applicant has been hired or a brief explanation of why not. In the latter case, the information on the card is shared with the member to help prepare for future interviews. Throughout the process of interacting with the member, the Job Developer may consult with the Job Coach or Counselor to help the member prepare for the interviews and engage in the job search.

Follow-Up and Retention

If a member is hired, the Job Developer begins a follow-up procedure that includes at least three contacts with the employer and employee during the first week of work. These contacts are intended to assess the fit between the job and work environment and the employee. If the reports are positive, the Job Developer decreases the follow-up over the next two weeks, and tapers off the contacts if the placement seems to be working out well. At this point, the Counselors take over tracking the member to make certain that she is staying in the job. Since it is not unusual for members to form a close bond with a particular staff member such as a Counselor or Job Coach, often this staff member alerts other staff, including the Job Developer, about the need for intervention. In two or three cases, the Job Developer has stepped in to work intensively with an employee to resolve work-related problems. Staff have also helped some members terminate the job in a manner that is the least detrimental to future job opportunities.

As of November, 1999, 91 of the 145 Jobs-Plus members were working. Of this number, 81 had secured their current employment since enrolling in Jobs-Plus. Because the focus thus far has been on recruitment and placing unemployed members in jobs, staff have concentrated less on promoting advancement, although the Job Coach, Job Developer, and Counselors have all raised the issue with selected members.

Entrepreneurial Opportunities

As noted earlier, a few residents have been involved in the Success by Design entrepreneurial training. The other entrepreneurial activity that has thus far occurred in the program is the work of the Tubman Group, which was discussed earlier in connection with the job readiness

training that it offers to residents. The Tubman Group currently consists of four Harriet Tubman Homes residents, with start-up and its own training supported by the Benwood, Community, and Lyndhurst Foundations through contacts facilitated by Jobs-Plus.

The impetus for creating the Tubman Group began during early Jobs-Plus planning. The RMC stipulated that all the services should be culturally sensitive to the needs and wants of the Harriet Tubman Homes residents. Soft-skills training, viewed as an important Job Plus component, became the focus for developing a service designed and delivered by residents themselves — one that would provide a valuable community service while creating an entrepreneurial opportunity for residents. For 16 weeks staff from the Keenan Institution at the University of North Carolina Business School came to Chattanooga to provide leadership training to the Tubman Group. The training focused on such issues as how to be a leader, how to conduct oneself in different settings, and exposure to community cultural resources.

At the end of the training, Tubman Group members found that they still lacked basic knowledge and skills that would enable them to set up their business. At this point, MDRC contacted the School of Business at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC), which agreed to offer additional training and other supports tailored to the needs of the Tubman Group. The relationship with UTC, which continues, includes classes and individualized teaching in the areas of business development, management, and marketing. With the support from Jobs-Plus and UTC staff, the Tubman Group has now developed a business plan, established an organizational structure, and become an incorporated entity in the State of Tennessee. The Tubman Group was awarded a subcontract from the Signal Center, a nonprofit agency that has resources from the Department of Human Services to provide soft-skills training to TANF recipients. Under this contract, the department is to refer appropriate TANF recipients to the Tubman Group.

As of October 1, 1999, the end date for the Tubman Group's first contract, 21 Families First/Jobs-Plus participants had taken part in Tubman Group training. Each workshop or training session ran for one week for approximately four hours each day. Child care and transportation to the classes held at UTC were provided by Jobs-Plus. According to Tubman Group members, residents were first skeptical about the ability of one resident to help another, but eventually most trainees came to respect the knowledge and perspective that was offered in course.

The first contract period was expected to result in the delivery of soft-skills training to 82 Families First/Jobs-Plus participants, but the total of 21 participants actually fell far short of that goal. The Tubman Group's inability to meet the goal mainly reflected the amount of time it took for referrals of TANF recipients to the training. With extremely heavy caseloads, some TANF Case Managers took time to become familiar with this new option for their clients. The Jobs-Plus Executive Director also observes that some residents who were referred to the activity failed to follow through, primarily because of the need to travel to the unfamiliar surroundings of the UTC campus.

The Tubman Group is currently negotiating another contract with Signal Center and DHS to resume soft-skills training for Jobs-Plus members who are TANF recipients. Looking toward future expansion, the Tubman Group has also submitted, or is preparing to submit, proposals for contracts with several large organizations to assist them with job readiness training.

Originally, the Tubman Group consisted of seven women. As the demands of training increased, three found they needed to leave the group in order to focus on their own GED training or to attend to health problems. The four who remained continue to take classes designed for them at UTC concurrently with carrying out the workshops and positioning themselves to grow as a business. Although expanding the Tubman Group to the extent that it provides financial self-sufficiency for its members has been challenging, Jobs-Plus, the RMC, and Tubman Group members continue to view it as a significant activity that is operated by residents, that has the potential to contribute to their self-sufficiency and personal satisfaction, and that at the same time can be useful to the other residents who use its services.

Support Services

Transportation and assistance with locating child care are the primary support services provided by Jobs-Plus. For some members, these resources are readily available, while others find them to be substantial barriers. Both the Counselors and the DHS Case Manager and Case Management Specialists are referral resources for TANF recipients, and the Counselors typically assist non-TANF members.

Short-term and emergency transportation are not a major problem for Harriet Tubman Homes residents because of access to a van provided to the RMC by the Chattanooga Housing Authority's Resident Initiatives Program. The van, which is available to any resident, is primarily used for transportation to and from work. Although residents are expected to obtain their own transportation eventually, this service is especially useful for getting to job interviews with short-term notice, securing emergency transportation, and getting to work during the period before the first paychecks provide funds for other options. Driven by one of the Counselors, the van is also available for taking residents to events such as health fairs and to services such as the clothing closets that help them prepare for work.

Short-term child care during orientation and on-site training is provided by a babysitting service at Harriet Tubman Homes. It is staffed by three residents, who received child care certification training through one of the Jobs-Plus partners, Chattanooga State Technical College. Although children can be cared for in a central location at the RMC office by these residents while their parents are receiving training or attending programs on-site, state licensing regulations limit the circumstances under which this babysitting service can be used.

Overall it appears that there are enough child care slots available to serve residents. However, some residents are having problems securing the funding and vouchers needed to get access to the slots — in some cases because they have been at work for long enough periods of time to become ineligible for transitional child care benefits. Also, some residents say that although child care is available, it is not as close to their homes as they would like.

To meet the need for conveniently located child care, the RMC and Jobs-Plus have worked for about two years to create a resident-owned child care facility at Harriet Tubman Homes. The owner of a chain of established daycare centers, Kandy Kastle, provided technical assistance to the effort. In recent months, the difficulties of finding a physical space that meets Tennessee licensing requirements have caused the planners to begin to work with the Inner City Ministry as well. Well-known and accepted in the community, the Ministry is located adjacent to

Harriet Tubman Homes. Apparently there is a suitable space in that building, and a joint venture to develop a child care center is under way.

Community Support for Work

As in other Jobs-Plus programs, the community support for work component of the Chattanooga initiative is in the early stages of development, but the program is moving in several directions that could help to strengthen social capital in ways that reinforce work. First, when asked to describe how the Harriet Tubman Homes community has supported work, some residents interviewed for this report spoke about peer support experiences. Tubman Group members describe evening meetings that they initiated during training to help one another meet the challenges of examining personal issues and mastering the course content. Similarly, residents pursuing certification as nursing assistants gathered to help each other deal with stresses that arose during training and to prepare for examinations.

Another group activity initiated by staff began as a focus group for men to obtain feedback about ways to enhance recruitment efforts. Members continued to meet as a support group that focused on clarifying issues facing men in Harriet Tubman Homes, including issues related to finding and keeping jobs.

Second, the informal contact between staff and residents that can take place in a "place-based" initiative in which some staff are also residents is a means of promoting community support for work. Staff describe these contacts as invaluable for communicating the Jobs-Plus message. For instance, the invitation given by the Jobs-Plus Program Coordinator, a Harriet Tubman Homes resident, to "come by my house and we'll sit on my porch and talk about it," appeared to bring people around after her regular work hours. Similarly, another resident and Jobs-Plus employee who transports residents uses the trips to talk with them about work and to reinforce the Jobs-Plus message. The two Counselors report that they continually try to promote Jobs-Plus in their daily contacts with neighbors and other residents: They say that such interactions as helping a neighbor with car repairs, talking about a child care issue, or sharing a pick-up basketball game have provided opportunities to initiate discussions about how residents spend time and how Jobs-Plus can help them to better provide for their families. Overall these kinds of contacts and relationships can be seen as first steps in building community support for work at Harriet Tubman Homes.

Third, celebratory events have been a way for Jobs-Plus to publicly reaffirm the importance of work to the community. One such affair was a graduation ceremony for members who completed the certification program in nursing assistance. Attended by family, friends and Jobs-Plus staff and partners, it was held in a church near Harriet Tubman Homes. Graduates attended the well-publicized event wearing their uniforms, and they received certificates and awards for outstanding performance. The ceremony was enhanced by a keynote speech from a State Representative. To further emphasize what graduates had accomplished, the ceremony was highlighted in an issue of the Jobs-Plus newsletter.

Similarly, the periodic Jobs-Plus "revivals," mentioned earlier, are a way of delivering a message about the value of work to the community. The Jobs-Plus radio outreach, discussed in connection with recruitment, spreads the Jobs-Plus message to residents.

Fourth, on-site staffing arrangements that make work-promoting services more accessible to residents have been used in Chattanooga. The Department of Human Services has placed a Case Manager on-site and hired two residents. Another agency, Families and Children's Services, has dedicated a full-time Community Organizer to Harriet Tubman Homes. The Private Industry Council, a Jobs-Plus Core Partner, has provided partial funding for on-site Job Developers and a Job Coach. Also, by offering an evening GED class, the One Room School of the Hamilton County Board of Education has expanded its schedule to accommodate residents who work during the day.

Financial Incentives

The design of Chattanooga's financial incentives package was based on several guiding principles. One is being certain that full-time employment and job retention are rewarded for all working-age household members. Another is that the early months of employment are a critical transition period during which residents need special incentives to reduce the impact of reduced or discontinued public benefits while they are assuming new work-related expenses.

Currently Chattanooga is implementing the HUD regulations that apply to all residents in TANF-approved education and training programs. Because Jobs-Plus has been accepted as such a program, the housing authority can apply this incentive to TANF recipients. Rent is still calculated as 30 percent of income, but "income" does not include new earnings for 18 months. Thus, rent is effectively frozen for this period.

Once this benefit has been exhausted, all members will receive the new Jobs-Plus rent incentives. For the first 16 months, the percentage of income that is used to calculate rent will be reduced from 30 percent to 10 percent. This stage will serve as a transition from the generous earnings exclusion available under the current HUD regulations to the long-term third stage, which sets rent at 20 percent of income. If the incentives are successful at increasing employment and earnings among residents, the Financial Incentives Work Group hopes that the 20 percent stage will continue beyond the demonstration period (pending HUD approval).

Chattanooga's incentive plan includes several other features that benefit families who work and/or participate in Jobs-Plus. First, residents participating in Jobs-Plus will be exempt from paying utility costs beyond those usually covered by the housing authority. Although this feature of the plan is not an incentive to work per se, residents have raised utilities costs as a financial problem because the costs seem to vary from month to month and household to household seemingly at random. Capping expenses will allow residents to make financial plans with some accuracy. Second, to encourage young adults to begin working, the wages of dependents under the age of 24 will not be counted in rent calculations (under the pre-Jobs-Plus regulations, the age is 18 years). Third, families with a member employed full time will receive help covering transportation costs. Each month they will receive a rent credit of $100.

To be eligible for Jobs-Plus incentives, residents must complete the program's five-day orientation. To remain eligible, they must stay in "good standing" with Jobs-Plus. At this time, what constitutes good standing is being discussed by the Financial Incentives Work Group, which will also set Jobs-Plus participation requirements. Residents who are at risk of losing eligibility for the incentives will go before a Community Review Board made up of residents and

other collaborative partners, which will make a final assessment of residents' standing. If the Board determines that a resident is not in good standing, that person's incentives will be suspended for three months. What happens after the three-month suspension has yet to be determined.

As of April 2000, Chattanooga's plan has been reviewed and approved by HUD and the Chattanooga Housing Authority, and plans for implementation are under way.

Facing Jobs-Plus Implementation Challenges

It is not surprising that an ambitious initiative like Jobs-Plus is faced with multiple challenges. Despite a general sense of having made significant gains, staff, partners, and residents who were consulted for this report all expressed the need to respond to ongoing and new demands.

The need to improve the level of participation in all facets of the program — from recruitment events through retention and advancement — was cited as a continual struggle. One staff member hypothesized that the very number and variety of recruitment activities have left residents feeling, "I've got plenty of time to join the program" — in other words, "If I don't respond to one event, there will be another." Skepticism about the value of holding low-wage jobs, a lack of self-confidence about their ability to compete in the workplace, and a sense of feeling soured by negative experiences with other programs are among the reasons staff hear from residents for not joining Jobs-Plus. Also, while about half the members are employed and several are actively seeking jobs, others have put their participation on hold. Accepting that life events such as a current pregnancy or personal and family illnesses may explain this delay for some members, staff acknowledge that they need to find ways to help and encourage more members who do not face insurmountable obstacles to participation to try to move into active training or job search. Promoting job retention is another challenge. Although most members find a good fit with their job, others need careful follow-up to prevent them leaving a job in a manner that "burns bridges."

Jobs-Plus staff and partners have continually discussed how to improve strategies for attracting residents to the program, keeping them engaged in its activities, and helping them maintain employment. The introduction of financial incentives is expected to have a major impact on participation. There is consensus that another important strategy for strengthening many aspects of the program would be to replace the current system of using progress notes in case records with a new automated tracking system to monitor participation. Bringing such a system into the program would enhance follow-up efforts, enable staff to understand the points at which problems seem to occur, and provide funders and other concerned partners with a picture of the extent to which the initiative is reaching short- and long-term goals.

Another challenge for Jobs-Plus is increasing the extent to which members are prepared for the types of jobs available in the Chattanooga area. Staff will need to study workforce data and be prepared to inform members about promising careers and entry-level requirements and in some cases to guide their search for positions in these fields. This will mean expanding the training programs beyond the popular CNA classes. Although residents have expressed a preference for on-site training, some programs that require extensive equipment and supplies

might be best delivered elsewhere. Thus any problems members have that interfere with their moving out into the community for training will need to be addressed. Of course, work on these problems will often pave the way for helping residents find jobs once the training is completed.

As staff look ahead to all these challenges, they can draw on the goodwill and positive relationships at Harriet Tubman Homes that both predate Jobs-Plus and have grown during the program period. They also should draw on early experiences to help the initiative develop. In the words of one staff member: "We need to be certain we are listening to ... [the residents] ... — identify the barriers and put components into place now. That way we will be seem to feel that prepared when the numbers pick up."

Thus far, staff do generally believe Jobs-Plus has been important for the Harriet Tubman Homes community. To illustrate, one staff member quoted a resident who had been particularly challenging to recruit and who finally endorsed the program at a focus group discussion. He asked the staff to "keep on caring about us. It feels good to have you show you care."

Chapter 4

Jobs-Plus in Cleveland

Linda Persse[8]

Program Highlights

This report covers the implementation of Cleveland's Jobs-Plus program through October 1999. The program, which was based in Woodhill Homes Estates, one of the oldest public housing developments in the country, was in operation from 1997 through January 2000. At that point, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CHMA) and MDRC mutually decided to withdraw the program from the national Jobs-Plus demonstration. It was felt that although some progress had been made, the program had not assembled enough of the elements of the Jobs-Plus program model in sufficient time to meet the schedule of the research study. However, some Jobs-Plus activities begun during the demonstration period continue at Woodhill Homes Estates.

At Woodhill Homes Estates, Jobs-Plus was viewed as the first effort in recent years to develop the kind of community revitalization program that had been offered to other public housing developments in the area. In addition, the program's core partners considered Jobs-Plus, in the words of one partner, as a chance "to do something creative" with the new TANF requirements for public assistance recipients.

Although the program formally began in 1997, funding was not available until February 1998 to hire the first staff member, a Program Facilitator, and a full complement of staff was not in place until 1999. Before the Facilitator came on board the program was managed by a group of Core Partners of the collaborative. During that period, a method of providing services was established that continued to be a significant part of operations throughout the life of the program: Two outside service agencies were given contracts to recruit residents into their own job readiness and placement programs. Their efforts, which predated the development of a plan for Jobs-Plus, filled the void.

Recruitment methods used first by the contracted service providers and later also by Jobs-Plus staff included door-to-door canvassing and sponsorship of events. Staff also used a more unusual outreach technique of fielding a resident survey on employment needs, which was expected to stimulate interest in Jobs-Plus.

Small numbers of residents have participated in the courses sponsored by the contracted service providers, which combined job readiness with placement and retention services, and a few also participated in a training course for licensed home child care providers. While some

[8]The author would like to acknowledge the generous contribution of information for this chapter given by several key persons in the Cleveland Jobs-Plus initiative. Their willingness to set aside time in their demanding schedules to help her to understand the daily operations, achievements, and challenges of the project is greatly appreciated. These people include Peter Whitt, Project Facilitator; LaTanga Vaughn and Shirley Combs, Resident Community Organizers; DeLois Burney, Deputy Director of Resident Opportunities and Community Initiatives for the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority; and Vicki Gaters, Site Coordinator.

residents had access to job development help through external programs, Jobs-Plus was still in the midst of planning its own job development strategies as the program ended.

Program staff eventually included three TANF Self-Sufficiency Coaches from the Cuyahoga County Department of Work and Training. In addition to supplementing recruitment efforts, these outstationed staff were authorized to enroll residents in TANF services and help them establish a plan for fulfilling their TANF obligations.

Cleveland's program experimented with several activities designed to strengthen peer support at Woodhill Homes Estates. They included an all-night retreat for a small group of residents, a series of discussions between working and nonworking residents, and sessions that encouraged TANF recipients to discuss their reactions and ways of adapting to new welfare regulations.

As of November,1999, no financial incentive plan had been submitted by the Cleveland site to MDRC or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Program Infrastructure

Jobs-Plus Collaborative and Staff

During 1997, Cleveland's program was not yet staffed, primarily because of a lack of funding attributable to the program's failure to secure an ED/SS grant. Instead, early operations were in the hands of the collaborative. The collaborative partners and CMHA staff who assumed roles of planning, managing and operating the initiative before staff came on board found it challenging to manage their Jobs-Plus responsibilities along with other duties. To help meet the challenge, the collaborative formed a governance committee, called Core Partners, comprising resident leaders and representatives from the CMHA, the then-Cuyahoga County Department of Human Services (DHS); the City of Cleveland JTPA; and other key agencies and institutions. In addition, two subcommittees, the Employment and Training Committee and the Support Services Committee, were formed in 1998 to address planning and programming needs. Both continued to meet throughout this report period.

Collaborative member organizations underwent several key changes during 1997 and early 1998. It was during this period that DHS was significantly restructured to include a stronger focus on employability, resulting in its incarnation as the Cuyahoga County Department of Work and Training. The reorganized agency continued the active involvement in the program that had begun under DHS.

But JTPA support waned. The agency did not replace a representative to Jobs-Plus when he moved away from Cleveland. Although the agency did not give an explicit explanation for its withdrawal, staff were opening one-stop Job Centers and likely felt unable to make time for Jobs-Plus. In addition, JTPA refused to provide the match for funds from the U.S. Department of Labor, which would have purchased the services of a Job Developer for Jobs-Plus.

CMHA representation on the collaborative continued, but the agency experienced a stressful period when its CEO was removed from her office due to financial irregularities. Other

important partners such as Starting Point, Cleveland Municipal Schools, Cleveland Works, and the Urban League maintained Jobs-Plus involvement with little change in representatives, and a new partner, Vocational Guidance Services (VGS), was added in fall 1998. The resident group, the Local Advisory Council (LAC) and other resident membership continued as well, though at least one influential resident leader left for personal reasons. The level of attendance at Core Partner and collaborative meetings has typically fluctuated throughout the program period, but the trend toward the end of the period covered by this report was downward.

The first full-time Jobs-Plus staff member, the Project Facilitator, who began in February 1998 was joined a year later by a Site Manager and two Resident Community Organizers. The program operated without a Job Developer until April 1999 when CMHA assigned a Job Coordination Specialist to assist Jobs-Plus with job readiness and job development efforts. Also in early 1999 an administrative assistant was hired. Together with the three TANF Self-Sufficiency Case Managers who were outstationed at Woodhill on a part-time basis, the six positions developed since February 1998 made up the full complement of program staff.

While the staff did include its own Case Manager, the Resident Community Organizers were available for some ongoing contact with participants. For approximately two months in mid-1998, case management was delivered through the Imani Community Action Partnership (ICAP), one of the Core Partners. However, when the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determined that grant monies from Drug Elimination funds could not be used for ICAP's services, the agency's involvement with Jobs-Plus ended, and case management functions were lost.

During the period when the program was not yet fully staffed, collaborative members and two temporary consultants funded by MDRC technical assistance dollars supplemented efforts. The first consultant offered training to staff and partners to help them run more effective meetings. The second worked intensively with staff and key partners to develop and write the plan for Jobs-Plus services required by MDRC. Her work preserved scarce staff time for routine program operations.

Facilities

As explained above, the first full-time staff members were not hired until February 1998. Yet when residents and collaborative members reflected on how to accommodate the staff members they expected to eventually recruit and hire, they first focused on possible renovation of the Woodhill Homes Estates Community Center, which had been boarded up for several years because of health and building code violations associated with its age and lack of regular upkeep. But when it soon became clear that renovations would require extensive time and funding, so the planners shifted to the concept of a campus-like arrangement, with services based at sites scattered throughout Woodhill Homes Estates. The planners concluded that there are at least two positive aspects of the arrangement: It heightened the program's visibility, and it helped residents from different areas of the estate feel a sense of program ownership.

The various Jobs-Plus facilities were opened in stages. The first office, called the Family Resource Network Center (FRNC), was created by merging and renovating two two-bedroom townhouses. When the office was ready in February 1998, the program had resources to hire only one full-time staff member. Even though it was probably not essential for the facility to be open at that point, resident leaders moved to complete the renovations quickly because they

thought it was important to give a tangible sign of the program's presence and to counteract views that Jobs-Plus was "like other promised programs that never materialize." In fact, the Project Facilitator never moved into the new office; instead, he worked from the housing authority offices three miles away.

For the subsequent 10 months, FRNC served as office space for staff and providers, as well as a reception, classroom, and meeting area. During this period physical tasks such as expanding the available space and modifying it to meet needs such as updated electrical wiring, telephone lines, and security absorbed significant staff time.

Meanwhile, additional units were being taken off-line and renovated for Jobs-Plus. For two months of this interim period, the LAC shared its limited office space and one telephone line with three TANF self-sufficiency case workers who had been assigned to Jobs-Plus. LAC members took this step because they considered it a priority for Jobs-Plus to respond expeditiously to the offer the Cuyahoga Department of Work and Training had made to bring these workers onto the site. The stresses created by the crowded office arrangement were alleviated, in part, by the commitment of both staff groups to the value of on-site services.

By early 1999, additional units had been added to the Jobs-Plus campus. These included two two-bedroom townhouses less than a one-minute walk in opposite directions from the FRNC. These units offered staff privacy for confidential interviewing and a secure place to leave supplies and records. The opening of a computer center in another renovated unit was long anticipated. Although preparation of a space for the center began early in 1999, acquiring the computers and software, updating wiring, installing a security system, and hiring a trainer and laboratory monitor meant that the center did not open while Jobs-Plus was in operation.

Program Flow

This section describes how program participants flowed through the services offered by Jobs-Plus. The text explains how activities were structured at different periods in the program as staffing arrangements shifted.

Recruitment

Like most of the program's activities, its recruitment patterns changed over time. In its early stages, aside from resident volunteer efforts, the program did little of its own recruitment but instead relied on two outside service providers that had contracts with Jobs-Plus to provide job readiness and placement services to enrollees. Collaborative leaders felt that these organizations would be motivated by the need to attract participants so that they could fulfill their time-limited performance-based contracts.

The service providers began their outreach before a full Jobs-Plus plan had been developed and before staff were hired. Rather than wait for residents to be served by Jobs-Plus staff in a discrete Jobs-Plus program, the providers felt their goal was to bring residents into their own programs immediately and, over the long term, to blend their services with those of the Jobs-Plus initiative as it evolved. For example, one job training and placement agency, Cleveland Works, recruited residents for its job readiness and job search workshops through door-to-door canvassing, fliers, and word-of-mouth communications at regular resident activities such as LAC

meetings and the weekly gathering to distribute fresh produce to residents. In mid-1998, VGS joined Jobs-Plus and began extensive recruitment efforts. However, VGS focused on its particular target population — residents in recovery from drug and alcohol abuse — rather than on the broader population of interest to Cleveland Works.

By the time VGS became a Jobs-Plus partner, the Project Facilitator had been hired. However, because his priority had to be to shape the overall initiative and secure additional funding for it, he had limited time to devote to recruitment. Thus, outside providers, assisted by volunteer resident leaders, remained the primary recruiters for the program.

These providers and volunteers expressed frustration at the slow pace of program implementation. They felt that recruitment was impeded by residents' growing impression that Jobs-Plus was just another program that "promised but did not deliver." They were not satisfied with the fragmented system of having contractors enroll residents into their individual services; instead, they wanted to be able to enroll residents into a coherent, functioning Jobs-Plus program. The lack of Jobs-Plus Case Managers who could focus on harder-to-serve residents and who could identify the most appropriate providers for referrals were also cited as obstacles to recruitment.

Once the staff began to expand, Jobs-Plus was able to devote more resources to recruiting. In May 1998, during the brief period in which ICAP provided case management to the program, a "Courtyard Event," which included food, music, and children's games, was held in front of the FRNC to advertise Jobs-Plus to the community. The event attracted primarily residents who lived closest to FRNC, and three or four attendees signed up for program appointments.

By early 1999, the hiring of a Project Coordinator and two Resident Community Organizers had further expanded the size of Jobs-Plus staff available for recruitment, and later that year TANF Self-Sufficiency Coaches also began assisting in these efforts. The Resident Community Organizers were a particular asset to program outreach efforts because they were Woodhill Homes Estates residents and active volunteers in the community.

Along with the Project Coordinator, the program staff began organized efforts to ensure that each household was contacted. One innovative outreach method used was a survey that solicited residents' views about their needs and barriers to employment, the types of training and employment they wanted, and their training and job experiences. Twenty-five residents who were interviewed subsequently signed on for job readiness and/or community support for work activities in Jobs-Plus.

Overall, staff estimate that 90 percent of working-age residents were informed about Jobs-Plus through door-to-door canvassing conducted either by staff members themselves or by providers. Supplementing the door-to-door outreach, staff organized two recruiting events in early 1999. The first, in April 1999, was a Jobs Fair attended by approximately 15 residents. Staff from several training and employment entities including Cleveland Public Schools, Cleveland Works, VGS, North Point, the Council for Economic Opportunities for Greater Cleveland, Raines Temporary Service, and the City of Cleveland JTPA were on hand to enroll participants in their programs. The event's formal presentation included an overview of Jobs-Plus, but again the emphasis was on recruitment of residents to enter programs of external providers rather than on direct Jobs-Plus enrollment.

In June 1999, providers recruited participants at a Jobs-Plus Grand Opening Celebration. Although just a few residents signed up for training and job placement programs, the event was well attended and brought renewed attention to Jobs-Plus.

A final point about recruitment is that the source through which a participant was brought into Jobs-Plus influenced the route that she or he subsequently followed. As this discussion has indicated, residents either joined the job readiness and placement programs offered by contract agencies or established a connection with Jobs-Plus through activities at the FRNC. Although there were some referrals and movement of participants between the two different kinds of activities, these shifts were the exception, not the rule.

Enrollment

Initially Jobs-Plus enrollment was tantamount to enrolling in one of the programs operated by Jobs-Plus external service providers, but by May 1999, Jobs-Plus had developed a centralized enrollment system. Providers that had contracts with Jobs-Plus were expected to forward to the Site Coordinator a referral form with basic information on each person they had recruited from Woodhill Homes Estates and an indication of whether the person was currently active or inactive with the agency. In addition, the providers were to encourage the participant to complete a Jobs-Plus enrollment form at the Jobs-Plus office.

By reviewing the referral forms, the Site Coordinator identified residents receiving services who had not enrolled directly in Jobs-Plus. The RCOs followed up with face-to-face or telephone contacts with these residents to ensure that they completed the enrollment forms. In addition, any resident who joined Jobs-Plus as a result of Jobs-Plus staff recruitment or who came into the office to join the program independently was asked to complete an enrollment form. The system was intended to enable the RCOs and Site Coordinator to identify participants, maintain contact with them, assess the extent to which their needs are being met, and refer them, as needed, to additional services.

Job Readiness, Training, and Placement

Most of Cleveland's job readiness and placement services were delivered by the three service providers that recruited residents into their respective programs: Cleveland Works, VGS, and North Point, all of which have successful track records for helping low-income job seekers find employment.

Cleveland Works operates a four- to six-week program that covers pre-employment, life management, and job retention skills. Students' mathematics and English skills are tested and assessed, and, if necessary, participants are offered GED instruction. Office skills training is also available. During the job readiness component of the course, staff help enrollees identify barriers to employment such as legal, substance abuse and mental health problems. In some cases, Cleveland Works attorneys help participants expunge criminal records and resolve problems such as custody disputes. The program also refers participants to community drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs. Participants who test positive for drug use are not sent to job interviews until they pass follow-up screening. Finally, Cleveland Works provides participants who find jobs with a $200 voucher to purchase clothing for work.

Vocational Guidance Service (VGS) participants attend a two-week program comprising one week of classes on personal growth followed by a second week on basic jobs readiness skills. During the first week, participants are encouraged to identify their personal goals and interests, and relate them to work goals. They are given information about the job market and are helped to match their interests with available job openings.

The second week covers basic job readiness issues, such as the importance of regular attendance, appropriate dress for the workplace, job interviewing skills, and a discussion of expected behaviors and relationships with co-workers and supervisors. Like Cleveland Works, VGS requires that participants test negative for drug use before being referred for job interviews. The agency staff includes a full-time chemical dependency counselor, who offers individual and group counseling and support sessions, and refers participants to community treatment programs as needed. VGS staff help participants get access to training programs in fields such as office management and hospitality work. VGS has established relationships with a number of potential employers, and like all VGS clients, Woodhill residents were able to draw on this pool of job leads. They also were given help in finding additional openings through job listings.

North Point as a rule places clients in entry-level jobs — for example, concession work at sports arenas and home health care aide positions. The agency offers participants a very brief job readiness component, with its length and content determined individually by a staff member and the client. Prospective home health care workers who are hired by Infinity Home Care Services receive additional classroom and hands-on training.

Providers from all three of these agencies reported they faced a challenge when it was time for Jobs-Plus enrollees to commit to ongoing participation in job readiness activities. At this juncture many participants dropped out of their programs. The reason appeared to be that, as noted previously, residents enrolled feeling that they needed jobs immediately. In the words of one resident, "Most people don't want to go through all that training when there's no guarantee that it's going to get them a job."

In contrast, the providers and Jobs-Plus staff valued job readiness training because they think it helps residents to develop skills that lead to more and better work opportunities, and it instills in potential employers the faith that the new workers begin their jobs with basic skills, attitudes, and behaviors that enable them to learn and perform their duties. Another benefit of job readiness training, according to staff and contracted providers, is that it makes it easier to place residents who are known to the Job Developer, especially by having shown themselves "job-ready." In words of a Job Developer at one of the independent service providers working with Jobs-Plus, "There is nothing you can do to help a person get a job in one week. We have to know you to work with you. We have to know we can stand behind you."

In addition to the more comprehensive services provided by Cleveland Works, VSG, and North Point, Jobs-Plus participants also were referred to more specialized services available from the Cleveland Public Schools, Starting Point, Edutec, and TANF Self-Sufficiency Coaches.

Cleveland Public Schools conducted GED classes on site for Jobs-Plus for about 18 months. This instruction, the earliest service brought to Woodhill Homes Estates by Jobs-Plus, was also the service that participants, staff, and collaborative members most often cited as a Jobs-Plus contribution to the community.

Two classes were offered each week, one in the afternoon and the other one in the evening, to accommodate the schedule of working residents. Generally they were well attended. However, toward the end of the demonstration period, staff noted that attendance was slipping and that the rate of completing the course and achieving a GED was not high. However, CPS continued its commitment and offered these classes as of the end of this report period. The CPS GED classes and the outstationed TANF coaches were the only providers who continued their presence after the contracts with Cleveland Works, North Point, and VGS ended.

Starting Point is an agency that assists in finding appropriate child care. It also offers child care training that leads to home daycare provider certification. This training was supported by Jobs-Plus Staff because it both opened a route to employment for residents and had potential to expand child care options for Jobs-Plus participants.

Several residents completed the training, although only two began caring for children in their homes, and after a point training was put on hold. The services never became well established because of CMHA's concerns about its liability for child care at the development, a question that was pending resolution in its legal department at the end of the report period. At CMHA's request, several course graduates deferred bringing children into their homes until the issue could be settled. Two graduates, however, started this work because they felt they should be allowed to provide the service since it is not prohibited by their CMHA rental agreements.

Edutec provided an on-site job readiness program for TANF recipients through a contract with the Cuyahoga Department of Work and Training. Edutech classes, which met three hours a day for a four-week period, focused on self-sufficiency and personal development. Consistent with problems experienced by the contract agencies, Edutech had difficulty recruiting residents, who said they wanted to find work immediately and showed limited interest in soft skills and job readiness training. Approximately six residents completed the Edutech workshop.

The Self-Sufficiency Coaches provided services for TANF recipients. When TANF recipients were recruited to Jobs-Plus or when they were scheduled for a session to redetermine their TANF benefits, they were sent to one of the three Self-Sufficiency Coaches. Together, the Coach and recipient developed an individual self-sufficiency plan, which included Jobs-Plus participation. One problem in developing these plans is that often there were not enough Jobs-Plus activities that interested residents to satisfy the state requirement that TANF recipients participate in 30 hours of training and work activities. Only recipients who were active in the classes offered by VGS, Cleveland Works, and North Point were able to accumulate enough hours to meet the requirement. Class hours for Edutech job readiness training and GED participation proved to be too limited for these purposes.

Direct Jobs-Plus Services were never available as part of the program. As originally conceived, the FRNC, staffed by Jobs-Plus employees and volunteers, was to be the hub of the initiative's activities. However, as discussed, the full program structure was not in place until late in 1999, and no direct delivery of job readiness, training, or job development services were provided by the Jobs-Plus staff.

Job Retention and Advancement

Through the end date of this report, most of the support for retention and advancement to Jobs-Plus participants was provided to residents placed in jobs via programs offered by

Cleveland Works, North Point, and VGS. All of these agencies have established regular methods of helping graduates keep jobs and move on to better positions. During the first few weeks after a graduate is placed, the agencies are in contact with both the employer and the employee several times a week. In subsequent weeks, the level of contact decreases if both the employer and the worker think the placement is going well; otherwise staff continue to try to solve on-the-job problems. Typically, the agencies continue some level of formal follow-up for 60 to 90 days after placement and subsequently check in with graduates on a more informal basis.

Several employed residents confirmed that agency staff members with whom they had worked previously did contact them once they were on the job. Generally these residents seemed positive about the relationship and said they were pleased that someone cared about how they were doing. However, some felt that they could manage on their own and did not need continued supports.

The providers interviewed for this report said retention efforts are a critical part of their agency's overall program. They cited a number of factors that can weaken an employee's connection to a job. In addition to the more obvious on-the-job problems, they noted that a new job can strain social and family ties. One provider said it is important to ask new workers how their significant others react to the redirection of their time and energy once they devote a large part of the day to a job. She frequently asks a couple to come in to talk with her about the impact of a job on their relationship.

Staff from all three agencies said that it is important to help new workers with budgeting. In the words of one Job Developer, "If they don't spend the money well, they may not think they're getting anywhere by working, so why bother?"

At least one Job Developer was concerned about the extent to which a new employee's community supports the value of working. He said that during his follow-up interviews, he always asks residents about whether they feel others validate their efforts. If an answer is negative, he sometimes encourages residents to expand their circle of acquaintances to include others who are working.

At the end of the program period, job advancement had not been a significant part of the program services in Jobs-Plus. However, staff members were aware of this deficiency.

Support Services

Many residents considered lack of access to child care as a significant barrier to participation in work and training. Staff and residents report that some parents hesitated to enroll in the program, asking, "Who's going to take care of my children?" And a number of parents who did enroll raised concerns about child care.

The program addressed residents' child care needs primarily through referrals to off-site providers. Starting Point staff were available to help parents identify and choose providers. In addition, the Self-Sufficiency Coaches provided TANF recipients with a list of daycare homes and centers in the area, and were willing to approve payment to a friend or relative. But because the Department of Work and Training will subsidize child care only if a participant is involved in

at least 30 hours of approved work and training activities, no subsidies were available for an individual attending only a GED class or other part-time training or job readiness activities.

Cleveland Works offers its enrollees child care for children over 2 years old at its downtown training center. However Jobs-Plus parents of infants expressed frustration with the need to find care elsewhere, and at least one of these parents dropped out of the Cleveland Works program for this reason.

Another child care need that surfaced was for short-term care while a resident attended an interview or other job-related function. Several service providers report that on occasion they watched a resident's children so that she could apply for a job. Although they say they often enjoyed the experience and wanted to do it to help participants move toward training and job opportunities, they also acknowledged that this kind of help was only a stopgap solution to the problem.

Transportation was another concern to residents. Once residents found jobs or enrolled in an off-site training or job readiness program, they were entitled to bus tickets or van transportation. However, several residents working a second or third shift expressed worry about traveling by bus at night. Furthermore, many jobs are located in regions of Greater Cleveland that are entirely inaccessible by public transit or have very limited hours of public transit service. For example, one resident who was hired through the home health care program was unable to accept several assignments because they included nighttime hours or were not on a public transit line. The Regional Transit Authority had agreed to work with Jobs-Plus to develop van pools, but none were in operation by the end date for this report.

One Jobs-Plus staff member observed that the only reason child care and transportation problems had not been addressed more fully during the program period was that only a small number of residents actively participated in training activities and employment. If the program had continued, there was consensus that further attention to eliminating child care and transportation problems would have been needed.

Community Support for Work

When staff or residents were asked about community support for work activities, they first mentioned a special all-night retreat for a small group of residents, called *Waiting to Exhale*. Shortly after the opening of the FRNC, six to eight residents held what they described as a "sleep-over" at the office. The purpose of the event and its activities was to identify and promote ways for residents to support one another. The residents who took part in *Waiting to Exhale* were very enthusiastic about the experience. Although the relationship of the retreat to employment was not made explicit, it was clearly designed to promote the peer self-help that can be considered a precondition for a strong focus on community support for work.

In another peer support event more clearly focused on employment, the and a resident volunteer organized a Saturday night program that brought together four working residents with a small group of residents who were not employed. The event included presentations by the employed residents about the ways they had acquired their jobs, some of the satisfactions they experienced through working, and methods they had used to cope with work-related stresses. All

the participants responded favorably to the session, and it was repeated, although not at the monthly intervals as planned.

Another community support for work activity organized by the Resident Community Organizers was a Saturday afternoon meeting held monthly at the FRNC. These sessions brought together residents with one of the TANF Self-Sufficiency Coaches for informal discussions about how the changes in welfare rules were affecting them. The Coach explained the new TANF expectations to residents. While maintaining an emphasis on the need to move toward self-sufficiency, she encouraged residents to share their concerns and feelings about how they were adapting to the changes. She also gave residents suggestions about how to maximize benefits such as extended Food Stamps and health care assistance eligibility. The activity was expected to provide residents with opportunities to share plans and experiences, and to challenge one another to overcome beliefs and behaviors that interfere with success in the workplace. However, sparse attendance limited the potential of the sessions to promote this kind of interaction.

Financial Incentives: Making Work Pay

The Incentives Committee of the Cleveland Jobs-Plus collaborative has considered various ways to change the current rent calculation to a formula that provides a greater financial incentive for residents to work. However, as of the time that Cleveland left Jobs-Plus, no rent incentives plan had been submitted to MDRC or HUD for approval.

Summary and Conclusions

Clearly Cleveland's Jobs-Plus initiative struggled to find new ways to implement a program that would increase employment among Woodhill Homes Estates residents. Despite the hard work of staff, providers, and residents, there was general agreement that the achievements were fewer than hoped for.

At the end of the period covered by this report, contracts with VGS, North Point, Cleveland Works, and Edutech had ended, without prospects for renewal. As discussed in this report, throughout the program period, these providers tended to use the development as a base for enrolling residents in their own programs rather than serving them through a larger Jobs-Plus initiative. As also shown in the report, the underlying cause of these patterns was the slow pace at which Jobs-Plus assembled the components that would have established a cohesive identity for the program. Besides the lack of full staffing until late 1999, the program was without case management and a financial incentives plan. With these critical pieces missing, it appeared unlikely that the program could take root at Woodhill Homes Estates within the time frame required for the demonstration. Preferring the flexibility of a more open-ended time period to the constraints of the demonstration schedule, staff and CMHA agreed to withdraw from the study but to try to maintain some of the Jobs-Plus services that had been brought to the development during the program period.

Chapter 5

Jobs-Plus in Dayton

Crystal Dunson and Theresa Myadze[9]

Program Highlights

The Dayton Jobs-Plus program, serving residents of the DeSoto Bass Courts housing development, operates out of the on-site Hughbert Poore Community Center. At the Center, program participants can use a Job Resource Computer Learning Center and work with Jobs-Plus staff to look for employment. Participants can also take advantage of a larger off-site facility, the One-Stop Job Center of the Montgomery County Department of Human Services. Among other resources, the Center's job bank provides an extensive listing of positions open in the Dayton area.

Residents fill five of the program's 15 staff positions. In addition, residents contribute to program operations by serving as Building Captains. These individuals, who are compensated with a small rent credit, help with outreach and are generally expected to serve as liaisons between the program and the community.

Small numbers of participants have enrolled in the various job training programs available through Jobs-Plus, and a few have also completed a job readiness program — either the program held at Sinclair Community College or the six-week course sponsored by the Dayton Urban League. The Urban League course, which is held on-site, includes discussions of the relationship between a family's efforts to become financially self-sufficient and problems such as abuse that are found in male-female relationships. Participants can also seek help with family problems by consulting the Jobs-Plus Violence Prevention Specialist.

The program has identified a large number of child care slots for participants, including spaces in the Melissa Bass Day Care Center, which is adjacent to the development and where up to 20 children can be cared for in a second shift. A Jobs-Plus Youth Program for young people between the ages of 11 and 18 is a source of supervised after-school care when parents are in work or training, and it offers positive activities to promote the growth and development of preteens and teens in the development.

Dayton's rent incentives program, which became effective May 1, 2000, replaced income-based rent with a flat rent for residents who are working. The rent incentives start at a low level (approximately 30 percent of the anticipated authority-wide flat rent) and after a year increases by about 55 percent.

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[9]We would like to acknowledge Cheryle Atwood, the Dayton Jobs-Plus staff, the residents of DeSoto Bass Courts, and Deborah Brown and Joyce Gerren for their untiring efforts while assisting with the development of this chapter. Their attention to detail proved invaluable and enhanced the overall quality of this chapter.

The Housing Development and Its Population

At the start of the demonstration, the development contained 467 households; 19 percent had some income from wages. Of all the households in the development, 262 (56 percent) derived some income from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Residents also had income from disability assistance, Social Security, and other miscellaneous sources. The average annual income of residents was $6,572.24, an income that is only 15 percent of the median for the Dayton/Springfield Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Many of these residents were affected by the policies of Ohio Works First, the Ohio welfare reform program, that have been in effect since July 1996. The policies mandate 40 hours per week of work or training-related activities for welfare recipients with children over the age of 6 months, a time limit of 36 months out of every 60 months for the receipt of cash assistance, and a five-year lifetime limit on receipt of assistance. One aim of the Dayton Jobs-Plus program is to help families of DeSoto Bass Courts satisfy TANF requirements as they pursue economic independence.

This chapter covers the first year of the program's implementation. According to program staff, as of the end of the report period, 333 individuals were registered for Jobs-Plus. Of the 333, 120 (36 percent) were employed.

Program Infrastructure

The Dayton Metropolitan Housing Authority (DMHA), through Sankofa Corporation, its nonprofit arm, manages Dayton's Jobs-Plus program. Oversight of the program is provided by the Jobs-Plus collaborative, which is made up of local public and private agencies. A 15-member staff is responsible for the day-to-day operations. As will be discussed, the Jobs-Plus office, which is based in the housing development, is affiliated with the larger off-site multi-service One-Stop Job Center. This section provides further detail on these different aspects of the program's infrastructure.

Jobs-Plus Staff

The Project Director has primary responsibility for the demonstration and its employment and training activities.[10] The Lead Case Manager and Case Managers give participants ongoing support to help them achieve and maintain self-sufficient lifestyles. The Violence Prevention Specialist helps children and families learn more appropriate and effective ways of interacting with other individuals. When necessary, she also makes referrals to outside agencies for help with domestic violence and substance abuse problems. The Job Developer and Job Developer Specialist work individually with participants to help them find employment. The Job Developer also serves as a liaison between working participants and their employers.

[10]In addition to the normal employment and training services associated with Jobs-Plus, the full range of activities was originally expected to include a second track of services designed to engage nonworking participants, mainly the disabled and elderly, in special efforts to enhance the quality of life at DeSoto Bass Courts and to provide support to working residents. However, as of the end date for this report, these activities were not yet part of the program.

The Youth Specialist and Youth Coordinator staff the Jobs-Plus Youth Program, a project that provides supervised activity for older children of working participants and also tries to involve these children in positive activities and employment. The Grant/Research Specialist seeks possible grant funding for Jobs-Plus and keeps pertinent statistics of program activity.

Residents fill five other positions. The Intake Specialist interviews Jobs-Plus applicants. The Resident Aide supervises participants in the Work Experience Program (WEP) and works with parents and the truancy program. One of her responsibilities is to operate an on-site program sponsored by the Dayton Board of Education to help prevent school absence among the young people of DeSoto Bass Courts. The Outreach Specialist facilitates community involvement in Jobs-Plus, and the Transportation Specialist provides participants with transportation to and from work in a Jobs-Plus van. The Job Resources/Computer Learning Center Specialist coordinates the Center's activities.

Jobs-Plus Facilities

The Jobs-Plus office is located within the Hughbert Poore Community Center, which is on-site at DeSoto Bass Courts. This location provides a convenient place for Jobs-Plus participants to meet with staff and one another. It also helps staff feel like, and be perceived as, a part of the community they serve. The office houses the Job Resource Computer Learning Center and the Jobs-Plus Youth Center.

In an effort to reach more participants and accommodate varied schedules, Jobs-Plus experimented from January to September 1999 with expanding office hours. They kept the office open until 8 P.M. Monday through Thursday, and added a Saturday schedule of 8 A.M. to noon. But because of lack of response to these additional hours, it was decided in October 1999 to resume the regular weekday schedule of 8 A.M. to 5 P.M., adding Saturday hours as needed.

The One-Stop Job Center

Another important part of Dayton's Jobs-Plus infrastructure is an off-site facility — the Montgomery County Department of Human Services' One-Stop Job Center. This facility was the centerpiece of Dayton's Jobs-Plus program design. Planners of the program originally saw the housing project's own Jobs-Plus office as functioning as a kind of satellite to this much larger Center.

The Center brings together numerous services, including support and health services, in a single location to help job-seekers get access to work and training programs. Not only is the Center a resource to job applicants, it also provides a coordinated system of services to employers. Established in 1997, the facility is the product of the work of the City of Dayton, the state, and the county to foster collaboration among key organizations and agencies. These same collaboration members built on their success in opening the Jobs Center to become partners in the Jobs-Plus collaborative, which is discussed next.

The Jobs-Plus Collaborative

The lead agency for the collaborative is the Dayton Metropolitan Housing Authority (DMHA). In this role, DMHA serves as the fiscal agent for the demonstration and as liaison to MDRC staff and coordinates efforts to meet the required match and secure additional funds. Another DMHA contribution has been space for program operations.

The Montgomery County Department of Human Services (MCDHS) is an important Jobs-Plus partner and has agreed to give top priority (50 slots) to Jobs-Plus participants for services available through the Greater Dayton Job Training Program (JTPA). In addition, MCDHS has stipulated that all DeSoto Bass Courts residents, who receive TANF grants and are required to fulfill work experience obligations, be assigned to this activity at the housing development. Most important, MCDHS approved Jobs-Plus to deliver case management services to all DeSoto Bass Courts residents in lieu of their attending the Job Center.

The DeSoto Bass Courts Resident Council has been involved in the Dayton collaborative since its inception. Council representatives were active participants in program development and have expended significant volunteer time and energy to move the demonstration forward. Activities have included organizing and hosting meetings, disseminating information, attending conferences and meetings, fundraising, and providing general support to site staff. A major accomplishment has been the recruitment and training of 24 Building Captains, who will help to promote Jobs-Plus registration and serve as liaisons for disseminating information. Another accomplishment has been an award of $100,000 from the Tenant Opportunities Program Support (TOPS) grant. This grant supplements funding for various Jobs-Plus programs.

Program Flow

The program is organized to help participants move through a series of services and training to enable them to go to work as quickly as possible. The following section presents descriptions of each major program component.

Recruitment

During the early stages of the program, DMHA entered into a contract with Project Impact, a local nonprofit organization, to act as a community organizer. Project Impact's role was to help recruit residents to Jobs-Plus and to work with participants on self-sufficiency once they were in the program. The Project Impact organizer made 253 outreach visits to homes of residents, handing out literature on the program and informing residents of its benefits. However, Project Impact has not been involved in Jobs-Plus for over a year.

Welfare recipients are sometimes assigned to making personal visits to recruit for Jobs-Plus. This activity is beneficial to the welfare recipients since it satisfies their Work Experience Program (WEP) requirements. The Lead Case Manager believes that door-to-door visits have been the program's most effective recruitment strategy to date. Nevertheless, resident reactions to it are mixed. Some residents indicate that canvassing can be effective, but many say that people do not want to be disturbed when they are at home.

Another recruitment measure that was used initially was the weekly Triple A (Attitude, Attendance, and Achievement) meeting. While the meeting's main focus was resident empowerment, it also provided a forum for program recruitment. The meetings were held twice per month from January 1998 through March 1998 and once a month from April 1998 through July 1998. A total of 146 persons participated. The approximate average monthly attendance was 10.

The Resident Advisory Council (RAC) assumed the role of community organizer and facilitated Triple A meetings. In addition, RAC's regular monthly meetings are used to promote Jobs-Plus. RAC is also in charge of the Building Captains system to disseminate Jobs-Plus information to residents. Building Captains can receive a $5/hour incentive payment in the form of a rent credit. At the writing of this report, 24 Captains were recruited and trained, and RAC aims to recruit additional Captains to cover all of the development's 64 buildings.

A final source of help with recruitment is the Outreach Specialist. This resident was hired to address concerns and problems that might keep fellow residents from going to work and also to inform them about Jobs-Plus.

Enrollment and Assessment

The Intake Specialist interviews individuals who decide to join Jobs-Plus. She uses a four-page application to gather general information about the resident, including information about family composition, domestic violence, weaknesses and strengths of applicants, and goals. The intake interview is also an opportunity to provide the applicant with voter registration information.

After enrollment, the resident moves on to the Case Manager for assessment. The Case Manager reviews the intake application, interviews the applicant, and talks to the applicant about his or her goals. The Case Manager then works with the applicant to develop an Individualized Training and Services Plan, which becomes the guide for moving the resident into employment. For example, if an applicant wants to become a child care provider, the plan may specify steps such as child care training and getting access to services such as transportation to and from class. Part of the assessment process is to identify participants in need of GED and pre-GED instruction. Depending on the enrollees' individual plans, some are referred directly to the Job Developer while others first participate in job readiness and/or training activities, which are described next.

Job Readiness Services

Participants who are judged as likely to have a harder time getting and sustaining employment can first enroll in one of two job readiness courses: the Dayton Urban League's Job Readiness Training and Sinclair Community College's New Directions/Job Prep program. To date, very few participants have taken advantage of these opportunities.

The Dayton Urban League, a local social services agency, offers a six-week job readiness workshop at DeSoto Bass Courts. Thus far three courses have been completed, with a fourth to start in 2000. The course teaches participants about self-expression; finding a job, including skills such as résumé preparation and interviewing techniques; addressing barriers to employment; building work relationships; and keeping a job. An effort is also made to help students understand how the different skills taught in the course can reinforce one another. A special component of the course, called the All-Male Revue, is an open forum session where the mainly female participants get a male perspective on employability issues from an all-male panel. A main focus of the sessions is the way in which personal problems, such as drugs and abusive relationships, can interfere with efforts to find and keep jobs. This informal session was developed specifically for the Dayton program. To date, 15 participants have completed one of the Urban League courses.

Nine Jobs-Plus participants have completed New Directions/Job Prep, the job readiness program offered by Sinclair Community College. The program's seminars focus on employability and job search skills. The seminar stresses job readiness skills, communication skills in the workplace, teamwork, résumé preparation, interviewing skills, and job search activities. The program draws on a variety of national tests and skills inventories to help assess students' needs and capacities.

Education and Training Services

Jobs-Plus staff have concentrated on helping participants find employment as quickly as possible. They assume that entry-level employees can upgrade their skills as they work in order to advance to higher-paying jobs, and that education and training should enhance rather than impede rapid attachment to the labor market. These assumptions fit with the new welfare legislation, which requires at least 20 hours of employment even for those who need additional training to become self-sufficient.

To determine the training that would best help participants move quickly into work, the Jobs-Plus collaborative relied heavily on local labor market studies that pinpointed areas of the Dayton economy with significant labor shortages (for example, nursing, data entry, transportation, and child care) and tried to encourage participants to undertake training in these fields. Table 5.1 summarizes the education and training services to which the program has referred participants thus far. As the table shows, with the exception of the All Male Revue component of the Dayton Urban League course, none of the training is limited to Jobs-Plus participants. Instead, these training options are open to anyone who wants to take advantage of them. (Two of the courses, however, have special funding for Jobs-Plus participants.)

Certified Nursing Assistant training has been the most popular course among participants because the course is brief and the pay for this kind of work averages $8 to $11 per hour. However, the turnover is high once participants begin to work in the field and come to grips with its realities. For example, custodial care may involve such tasks as changing the diapers of an elderly man. Prior criminal history can also impede job placement in this field. Until recently, the course was offered by Miami Jacobs Service Center, and of the four individuals who participated, all graduated. Subsequently, the training site was shifted to the Longfellow School and was sponsored by the Board of Education. So far, one Jobs-Plus participant has enrolled and completed the program.

The 12-week Pharmacy Technician training offered by CVS Pharmacy begins with four weeks devoted to retail/cashier training, and the remaining time is devoted to actual pharmacy training, including training in medical terminology, shorthand, germ prevention and safety, measurements, FDA and DEA regulations, and prescription decoding. One graduate, who said she was impressed with all the information the course offers, is now pursuing education to become a pharmacist.

Table 5.1

Jobs-Plus in Dayton: DeSoto Bass Courts

Resident Participation in Education and Training Services

Provider	Program/Services	Location	Jobs-Plus Specific?	Total Participants	
Board of Education	Pre-GED and GED	Dayton Boys & Girls Club, Job Center, Roosevelt Adult Training Center	no	Current Completed Cumulative	21 2 23
Miami Jacobs	Certified Nursing Assistant training	Miami Jacobs Service Center	no	Current Completed Cumulative	0 4 4
Board of Education	Certified Nursing Assistant training	Longfellow School	no	Current Completed Cumulative	0 1 1
Horizon Security	Training for security positions	Park Manor Housing Development	no	Current Completed Cumulative	0 3 3
HOST Corporation	Training for hotel work	Job Center	no	Current Completed Cumulative	1 0 1
CVS Pharmacy	Pharmacy Technician training (12 weeks) (Ended 6/99)	Job Center	no	Current Completed Cumulative	0 3 3
America Works	Nontraditional training in carpentry and painting (Ended 9/99)	Parkside Homes Housing Development	no	Current Completed Cumulative	0 5 5
Miami Valley Child Development	Basic computer skills (8 weeks) (Ended 5/99)	St. Agnes Church	no	Current Completed Cumulative	0 8 8

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Provider	Program/Services	Location	Jobs-Plus Specific?	Total Participants	
Child Care Clearinghouse	Training for Home Child Care Providers (6 months)	Dayton Boys & Girls Club, now Children's Medical Center	no (Special funds for Jobs-Plus participants)	Current Completed Cumulative	3 3 6
DMHA	Job Shadow Program: training and mentoring focused on work in public housing developments (90 days, 20 hours/week)	DMHA and other companies	no	Current Completed Cumulative	1 8 9

SOURCE: Interviews with Jobs-Plus staff and service providers.

Of the three graduates of the training offered by Child Care Clearinghouse, two have now left DeSoto Bass Courts, while one is currently providing child care under a provisional license.

The Job Shadow Program, sponsored by DMHA and operated by Sankofa, combines job training, employment, and mentoring, all of which are focused on the work of operating a housing development. Participants are trained 20 hours per week to perform the duties of a full-time employee. The housing authority underwrites each participant's pay for the first 90 days. At the conclusion of the program, participants may be hired into the same position for which they shadowed or a similar one. The yearly program capacity is 27 trainees, and the housing authority is committed to including at least 10 Jobs-Plus participants in the group. The housing authority now employs two Jobs-Plus graduates, while four have secured employment with outside companies.

Job Search and Development

The collaborative analysis of labor market data that was used to shape its training activities also informed the program's job development efforts. Many of the fields that were found to have significant labor shortages — for example, maintenance, nursing assistance, sales support, clerical work, packaging, data entry, child care, and transportation — were judged to be suitable for entry-level Jobs-Plus participants. The study also showed that Montgomery County has significant shortages in areas that offer advancement for residents with more work experience. This includes jobs in the tool and die manufacturing and computer industries. While planners were aware that these areas may be appropriate for only a minority of enrollees when the enter the program, it is good to be aware of the shortages since they could possibly provide openings for participants who find entry-level jobs and are ready to advance their careers.

Dayton's association with the One-Stop Job Center gives the program access to special resources that are unavailable to similar programs in most other cities. The Center's Job Bank posts hundreds of jobs from county employers every week, and Jobs-Plus is able to tap into them. In addition, when employers call with large needs, the Job Bank contacts the Jobs-Plus office. For example, an assembly plant called the Job Bank with a large work order. The Job Bank then called Jobs-Plus, and the office responded by sending approximately 35 participants to apply for the jobs. Seven of the 35 applicants were hired. Wherever possible, Dayton encourages such group employment, which allows participants to give each other support for working.

The responsibilities of the Job Developer and Job Developer Specialist are to work closely with the Job Center and potential employers to place participants in appropriate positions. As noted, participants have access to resources of the program's own computer center, which is scheduled to receive its own online Job Bank, as well as to resources at the Job Center.

Entrepreneurial Activity

The program has begun to promote entrepreneurship. The home child care program, already described, helps participants go into business for themselves. One resident recently opened a beauty shop at one of the senior housing developments with the help of a loan arranged through Jobs-Plus.

A number of special funds available to Jobs-Plus participants are intended to support participants' entrepreneurship, training, and job retention. Program participants have used a few

of these funds sparingly, and some have not yet been tapped. This low rate of utilization is shown in Table 5.2.

Unpaid Work Experience

The Job Center refers Desoto Bass Courts TANF clients with WEP assignments to the Case Managers at Jobs-Plus. The Jobs-Plus WEP supervisor reports the status of these clients to the Case Manager at the Job Center on a monthly basis. WEP assignments, designed to prepare participants for the world of work, are performed on-site at the Jobs-Plus office where participants assist the Jobs-Plus staff. On average, 25 individuals have been referred per month, with an average of about eight participants actively performing work assignments. When residents fail to report to the Jobs-Plus office for their WEP assignment, the Jobs-Plus staff try to determine the problem and work with the resident. If the TANF staff at the Job Center are notified that the resident failed to report, the TANF staff will determine whether to sanction the client.

Job Retention/Advancement Services

The program's initial focus, due in part to the emphasis on quick labor market attachment in Ohio Works First, was on helping individuals become employed, rather than on retention and advancement. However, it is becoming clear that what happens after a resident becomes employed is a serious consideration. The Lead Case Manager for Jobs-Plus predicts that most Jobs-Plus participants will have two or three jobs before the end of the demonstration.

Partially due to these concerns, the collaborative is now concentrating more of its attention on retention and higher-paying jobs for Jobs-Plus participants. The Job Developer routinely follows up with employers to make certain that participants are showing up for work and performing as expected on the job. If there are problems, such as personal conflicts, the Job Developer tries to resolve them before jobs are lost. The difficulty has been, however, that when the Job Developer is apprised of the situation, it is already too late; that is, the resident has either already been fired or left the job.

When in session, the weekly Triple A meeting stressed proper workplace attitudes, attendance, and problem-solving. This element of the program previously engaged over 140 participants and provided another means of encouraging job retention. In addition, although they have been rarely used so far, funds such as the Get-Ahead Loan and the One-Time Emergency Loan have the potential to help participants stay employed.

Case Management

The Case Managers work one-on-one with participants and routinely follow up with their clients to determine whether their Individualized Training and Services Plans are feasible or need to be adjusted. They also routinely follow up with employers to make certain the resident is showing up for work and performing as expected on the job.

Those involved in the process do not consider Dayton's case management typical. It is described as being on a more personal level because participants bring personal issues to the table. Case Managers believe that unless pressing personal problems are resolved, participants will be unable to make progress in the program. The services provided by the Jobs-Plus Case Man-

Table 5.2

Jobs-Plus in Dayton: DeSoto Bass Courts

Special Funds Available to Jobs-Plus Participants for Business Start-Up

Fund	Provider	Purpose	Jobs-Plus Specific?	Total Participants
Home Child Care Start-Up Grant	Child Care Clearing-house	Purchasing items such as toys for start-up of home child care	yes	2
Resident Education Fund	Ohio Department of Development and ED/SS	Up to $1,000 per resident for help with tuition leading to certification for positions such as nursing assistant or driver or for purchase of uniforms and tools	yes	3
Get-Ahead Loans	Sankofa Corporation	Up to $1,500 to help an individual stay employed — e.g., a loan to purchase a car to drive to work	no	4
One-Time Emergency Loans	Dayton Foundation	To assist participants with emergency needs, e.g., utilities being shut off	yes	Applied: 20 Approved: 15
Prevention, Retention, and Contingency Emergency Reserve	Department of Human Services	Up to $1,000 of assistance in goods and services to eligible Jobs-Plus participants to help with finding and keeping jobs (Their income must be at or below 200 percent of the poverty line.)	no	0

SOURCE: Interviews with Jobs-Plus staff and service providers.

ager are enhanced by their relationship with the Job Center Case Manager, who also supports Jobs-Plus participants.

As of July 1, another case management service that the program plans to add is a Home Management Program. It will use home visiting as a way of providing support to participants who need help to learn how to better organize their home environments, especially if they are to enter the workforce. Home visitors will work with participants on such issues as time management, budgeting and shopping, and parenting.

Support Services

A preliminary survey of the DeSoto Bass Courts residents found that residents considered the major obstacles to employment to be child care, transportation, and work clothing. Following are summaries of the program's efforts to address these and other needs.

Child Care and the Youth Program

Access to affordable, reliable, and safe child care is a critical factor to the success of the Jobs-Plus program and one of the most pressing needs of DeSoto Bass Courts residents. The collaborative identified approximately 250 child care slots from existing or planned programs. In addition, as noted, the program provides training to Jobs-Plus participants to provide in-home child care to participants.

The program has two main institutional providers. Melissa Bass Day Care Center, conveniently located next to the development, has expanded its operations to include a second shift to serve 20 children of Jobs-Plus participants, ages 2 to 7. Currently 14 children are registered for this shift. The center is also committed to recruiting and training eight Jobs-Plus participants to staff the second shift. Four program participants have been hired to work full time, although one subsequently moved out of the development.

For program participants with older children, ages 11 to 18, a year-round Youth Program, staffed by the Youth Coordinator and the Youth Specialist, operate on-site. While the Youth Program is discussed here in connection with Jobs-Plus support services and child care, besides providing support to working parents by giving young people a supervised place to stay after school, it also serves as a program component in its own right, because it is intended to promote children's healthy development. This concerted effort to address the needs of two different generations of families trying to become more self-sufficient is a special feature of Jobs-Plus in Dayton.

Parents must be registered with Jobs-Plus before their children can participate in the program. It began with an average of only four participants per week but has grown dramatically. Approximately 102 young people per week now participate during the school year, and over the summer the weekly average rose to 176 children. Total enrollment is 367. One focal point of program activities is violence prevention and conflict management, and efforts are made to provide young people with positive experiences and role models. The Concerned Christian Men, a local organization, provides a spiritual component to the program.

The program also promotes youth employment. Four young people are currently performing secretarial-type duties and are being paid $5.15 per hour as assistants to the Youth Specialist. In another related effort to support youth development, last summer, 37 young people worked 20 to 30 hours per week painting and performing secretarial-type work through Jobs for Grads, an organization that finds summer employment in the local area for youth 14 to 21 years old.

Transportation

The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is providing $7,500 annually for bus tokens and passes for Jobs-Plus participants. Recipients are eligible for the passes until they receive their first paychecks. RTA is also restructuring some of its routes to make jobs more accessible to Jobs-Plus participants. Three services discussed earlier, the Jobs-Plus van and the Get-Ahead and One-Time Emergency Loan Programs are also available to facilitate transportation.

Clothing

A group of community volunteers has established a clothing pantry at the Dayton Job Center. In addition, Jobs-Plus provides a voucher of up to $100 to employed Jobs-Plus participants to purchase appropriate clothing from a local retailer or uniform store. From February 1999 through November 1999, 27 Jobs-Plus participants used vouchers.

Other Support Services

For those individuals who face substance abuse problems and/or are victims of domestic violence, Case Managers refer participants to the Violence Prevention Specialist, who then coordinates referrals with Artemis House, a domestic violence agency, or to Daymont West, a provider of substance abuse prevention and treatment services. The provider refers those who need inpatient treatment to Montgomery County's centralized intake and treatment system. So far, the program has worked with five participants regarding domestic violence and eight with substance abuse problems that hinder their ability to go to work.

When residents are interested in moving out of the development, Jobs-Plus encourages them to take advantage of transitional housing available through Sankofa Corporation's Family Self-Sufficiency Program. Thus far, two participants have moved to other housing developments that are reserved for employed residents only.

Financial Incentives

Because affordable housing is readily available in the area surrounding DeSoto Bass Courts, Dayton's Financial Incentives Team considered it important to develop a plan that offers working residents lower rents than the prevailing rates in the local market as a reward for their employability efforts. The team also wanted the incentives to prepare individuals to pay the authority-wide flat rent, which has now been established as an alternative to income-based rent and will be in effect after the demonstration ends. Thus, Dayton's plan eliminates income-based rent calculations, replacing them with a two-step flat rent system. The flat rents are set at a percentage of the anticipated authority-wide flat rents and are lower than what most full-time

workers would pay if their rents remained income-based. Under the plan, rents will not rise with increases in earnings, thus allowing families to keep more of their earned income.

A working resident who has attended a Jobs-Plus orientation and completed an individual service plan is eligible to receive the financial incentives. These incentives will be lost if the resident stops working. As of mid-June, 119 working residents were receiving financial incentives.

After a resident pays the first step for one year, rent will be increased to the second step and will remain in place for three years or until the demonstration ends, at which time the authority-wide flat rents will apply. The first step is roughly 30 percent of the anticipated rents that will be offered to residents authority-wide, and the second step increases rent by about 55 percent; both steps vary according to apartment size.

Dayton's plan allows individuals to choose the income-based rent over the flat rent if it is beneficial for them to do so. (Although the flat rents are set at reasonably low levels, some part-time workers would be better off paying the income-based rent.)[11]

Dayton submitted its plan to HUD in November 1999, and it was approved in February 2000. Implementation began on May 1, 2000.

Community Support for Work

Dayton's efforts to promote community support for work are in their early stages, but the program includes several features with the potential to strengthen connections between residents and to modify institutional practices in ways that promote employment.

Resident Network Ties

The program's Building Captain system was established by the RAC and predates Jobs-Plus, but its responsibilities have been expanded to include activities related to employability and Jobs-Plus. The system is now intended to permeate through the community by establishing a Jobs-Plus presence in every building to serve as a conduit for information on the program. Thus, it is a significant effort to bring residents together in ways that focus attention on employment.

Another way of encouraging ties among Jobs-Plus participants is the mutual support they give to one another, a kind of informal "buddy system," when they work for the same employer and travel together to their jobs in the Jobs-Plus van.

Institutional Change

Many of the steps Jobs-Plus has taken to bring about institutional change to support work at DeSoto Bass Courts have already been discussed in this report. They include the second shift for Jobs-Plus participants at the Melissa Bass Day Care Center, RTA's planned restructuring of

[11]The plan originally called for another benefit, whereby working adults who were not immediately eligible for health coverage through their employers and were not otherwise eligible for subsidized insurance would receive it through Jobs-Plus for a monthly fee of $35 for up to six months of coverage. After that time, it was hoped that individuals who were continuously employed would shift to their employers' health plans at the end of the six-month period, if not earlier. Unfortunately this element of the plan was not implemented.

bus routes to accommodate work needs of Jobs-Plus participants, and permission for WEP workers who are Jobs-Plus participants to fulfill their assignments at DeSoto Bass Courts.

One other activity reflecting an effort to change institutional practices to ease residents' access to employment is the collaborative's involvement in an ongoing effort with local police authorities to remove criminal history from the records of participants. To qualify, the participant must have a record with only one conviction and that must be for a first-time offense. Furthermore, following felony convictions, individuals must demonstrate that they have been free of additional charges for three years. For misdemeanors their records must be free of charges for one year. Finally, if restitution was required, the debt must have been paid, and the case must have been acquitted or the charges dropped. To date, no records have been expunged. However, approximately six individuals have applied to expunge their records, a process that could take up to two years to complete.

Key Lessons

Dayton's program is moving ahead at a steady pace, and now that the financial incentives have begun, momentum may increase. Over the period covered in this chapter, Dayton has tried a number of interesting approaches to providing services. For example, besides including a strong representation of residents on the staff, the program is using the Building Captain system to further engage residents in employability efforts. Dayton makes a special effort to serve youth and to address issues of family violence, and more generally there are signs that its case management services are well regarded by residents who use them. The low levels of participation in education, training, and job preparation services may need further attention. In addition, ongoing coordination with the One-Stop Job Center will be needed to maximize the value of this important resource.

Chapter 6

Jobs-Plus in Los Angeles[12]

Program Highlights

Los Angeles is the only city where two housing developments were chosen to participate in the national Jobs-Plus demonstration: Imperial Courts, in the Watts neighborhood of South Central; and William Mead Homes, just north of downtown. The selection of two sites reflected both the city's diversity and the determination of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) to develop an effective program to serve the two primary population groups in public housing. As a consequence, William Mead was chosen as a primarily Latino site, while the resident population at Imperial Courts is majority African-American (though, as is true of much of South Central, Imperial Courts is now approximately 30 percent Latino — primarily recent Central American immigrants). This chapter will focus exclusively on program developments at Imperial Courts.

Jobs-Plus at Imperial Courts has experienced a slow beginning, partly because of delays in implementing the rent incentives component and partly because of several substantial changes in staff and leadership both at the site and at the housing authority. Program development has also been affected by difficulties in establishing an effective collaborative structure in which partners' roles are well defined and the goals for the collaborative are clear.

Staff have, however, implemented outreach and recruitment strategies and have established a range of employment services, including assessment, case management, job preparation, and job development — all of which are individualized to meet specific resident needs. Staff conduct regular group orientations to introduce themselves and the Jobs-Plus program to residents, after which residents complete an assessment and meet individually with their Case Manager. Mental heath services and counseling are available on-site through Agustus Hawkins Mental Health Center, as is case management, through the CalWORKs/GAIN system (California's welfare-to-work program).

Residents of Imperial Courts have access to an on-site Computer Learning Center run by the housing authority, and there are limited supportive services, such as transportation assistance and clothing vouchers and — for those pursuing training — assistance with tuition, books, and training stipends. Youth employment has been a major focus of Los Angeles Jobs-Plus, and the program has established collaborative relationships with work experience programs such as the Summer Youth Employment Program, UCLA Teen Works, and the Youth Entrepreneurial Demonstration Institute (YEDI).

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[12]Earl Johnson conducted the original field research for this chapter. Armando Garcia, Olis Simmons, Linda Kato, and Jennifer Miller provided additional information. Earl Johnson prepared the first draft of this chapter; the final version was prepared by the editors, with help from Jennifer Miller. We thank the staff, residents, and other collaborative members who shared their valuable insights for this chapter and are especially grateful to Lourdes Castro-Ramirez for her careful review.

The program's rent incentives program is set to begin in June 2000 and has three components:

1. A rent freeze for the first 18 months for participants whose rent is at or below flat-rate levels
2. A rent reduction to the flat-rate for participants paying above flat-rate levels
3. One month of free rent for those residents previously unemployed and who complete a minimum of 128 hours of work or training monthly

The Housing Development and Its Population

Four major public housing developments, including Imperial Courts, are located in the Watts neighborhood of South Central, an area that has some of the highest rates of poverty, economic hardship, and unemployment in Los Angeles County. Situated on slightly more than 36 acres, Imperial Courts is surrounded by highways and main transit thoroughfares, including a light rail line that runs east-west to the airport and north-south between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach. Eighty-six buildings make up the Imperial Courts complex, which has 489 primarily two-story apartments, each with a small front yard. There are several small park-like "common" areas throughout the development, where young men often congregate throughout the day.

Many Imperial Courts residents have lived in the development for a long period of time — some, for all their lives. Mirroring the demographics of the Watts community, Imperial Courts was overwhelmingly African-American until the 1990s. Over the past 10 years, however, there has been an influx of Latino residents — primarily recent Central American immigrants — who now make up approximately 30 percent of the development's population. The target group of the Jobs-Plus program is working-age adults, between ages 21 and 60; 85 percent of Imperial Courts residents fall into this category.

As of June 1999, 80 residents were employed and reporting an average annual income of $12,000 to the housing authority. Some 44 percent of the income that residents report to HACLA comes from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, and 303 residents claim these benefits as their sole source of income; on average, TANF benefits amount to $6,113 annually. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits are the next major source of resident income. Few Imperial Courts residents report receiving income through the Earned Income Tax Credit program; in 1999, Jobs-Plus staff thus began offering on-site workshops about the EITC and helping residents to file for the credit.

As in many neighborhoods in Los Angeles, it is difficult in Watts to travel to places of business without a car. Although light rail lines and the bus system are available, using them to travel to the downtown business center, for example, can take more than an hour each way. Near some of the city's busiest highways, Imperial Courts is nonetheless isolated from major economic activity, and nearby employment opportunities are in short supply. There are a few locally owned stores within walking distance of the development, as well as a mini-mall that houses several fast-food restaurants, a supermarket, a pharmacy, and a check-cashing business.

Even though violence has decreased in Watts over the past several years, residents still report that safety is a serious concern at Imperial Courts, particularly at night. One indicator of the level of concern is that, in the early stages of Jobs-Plus, the Program Director made a plea to collaborative members for donations of clothing or uniforms that residents could wear to reduce the risk of being harassed while traveling to and from work or waiting at the bus stop. Another source of concern is the area located in front of the Learning Center, known as the "island," where resident and nonresident men alike congregate and openly deal a significant amount of drugs.

One Jobs-Plus staff member observes that many residents provide services to one another, such as hair care, child care, and a resident-operated candy store. The staff member notes, however, that services and activities for males in the development are insufficient. Residents express frustration that, in early 2000, the on-site Drug Elimination Program (DEP), which offered a range of popular youth and antidrug programs, was closed. Even though Jobs-Plus can access DEP funds for youth and community activities, residents feel that the DEP office created an important antidrug presence at the site which Jobs-Plus, because of its employment focus, does not have.

Further, the closing of the Imperial Courts gym three years ago for demolition and reconstruction by the city's Recreation and Parks Department has eliminated an important social and recreational forum for both adults and children in the development. Funding for the reconstruction project (which was to be completed within six months) was stalled in City Council shortly after the project began. This situation has compounded residents' sense that, as a development, Imperial Courts is "losing ground." The Resident Advisory Council (RAC) has, however, successfully lobbied the city to provide funds to expand Imperial Courts' youth programs, given the city's failure to complete the gym. These monies have been used to establish a weekend recreation program that includes homework assistance, movies, games, and arts and crafts. Jobs-Plus supported this effort by providing funds for two work experience positions to coordinate the youth programs. No similar activities, however, have yet been established for adult males.

In an effort to help residents move out of public housing, Imperial Courts was chosen a few years ago to participate in a HUD-sponsored Moving-to-Opportunity program that provided housing assistance to help residents move closer to their employers. This program met with only modest success, however, largely because of the unavailability of affordable housing in Los Angeles; in addition, residents were reluctant to leave the neighborhood because they would feel isolated from the larger community. The limited success of the Moving-to-Opportunity program foreshadowed some of the challenges faced by Jobs-Plus.

Program Infrastructure

Management

Imperial Courts and William Mead Homes each have an on-site Project Coordinator responsible for day-to-day management of program activities; site staff are colocated with staff from partner agencies. The two Project Coordinators report to the Project Director, who has overall responsibility for the program, including fundraising, program development, and managing the collaboratives. The Project Director's office is located off-site at the housing authority.

In Los Angeles, the Jobs-Plus collaborative has adopted a two-tiered structure: An umbrella "executive collaborative" oversees the two site-level collaboratives. The executive collaborative meets quarterly and is made up of senior management staff from the welfare department, workforce development office, school district, and several community-based organizations. While the executive collaborative has made important contributions to Jobs-Plus and maintains "formal" authority over the program, residents tend to regard Jobs-Plus as an extension of HACLA and, in particular, of the Housing Management Department. The housing authority's administration of rent incentives probably contributes to this perception. (More information on this topic is provided in the section "Financial Incentives.") In addition, there are signs that activity on behalf of Jobs-Plus at the executive collaborative level is diminishing. For example, attendance at the quarterly meetings has waned in recent months, and higher-level management staff have begun sending midlevel counterparts in their place; in some cases, the same staff person is representing the collaborating agency at both the executive and the site collaborative meetings.

The two site-level collaboratives — one each at Imperial Courts and at William Mead Homes — meet monthly and are composed of midlevel operations staff who, as noted, are often from the same agencies that serve on the executive collaborative. The site collaboratives also include a broad range of service providers located in each development's geographic area. For example, Kulick, a youth employment program located in South Central, sits on the Imperial Courts collaborative; William Mead Homes has identified and engaged similar service providers, such as the East L.A. Skills Center, from within its own neighborhood.

The level of participation and engagement at the Imperial Courts site collaborative has fluctuated as a result of changes in leadership and staffing but appears to have improved since the hiring of the most recent Site Coordinator in July 1999. Attendance at monthly meetings includes 8 to 10 agency representatives as well as Jobs-Plus Job Developers, Community Organizers, and Case Managers. Staff report that these meetings provide a useful forum for working out referral processes, coordinating services, developing methods for interagency communication, and sharing information about new programs and resources.

Staff

In terms of hiring staff for Jobs-Plus and establishing roles and responsibilities, Imperial Courts has experienced a slow beginning. For example, after deciding to establish a Project Director position and specifying its functions, the collaborative took nearly a year to fill the position full time. In the interim, two housing authority employees, with support from a skeletal staff, managed the programs at both Imperial Courts and William Mead Homes, at the same time overseeing other programs for which they were responsible at the housing authority. The last Project Director — the fourth person in this position — began work in July 1999 and left in January 2000.

The Imperial Courts site was not fully staffed until March 2000, and the complement of staff has not been static. Currently the core staff consists of the following positions: Site Coordinator, Case Manager, Senior Case Manager, Community Organizer, Job Developer, Resident Services Assistant, and Clerk-Typist, which is currently a vacant position.

Colocated staff from other agencies include a GAIN case manager who is on-site half a day twice weekly; a mental health caseworker from Augustus Hawkins Mental Health Center;

and a second job developer, outstationed from the State of California's Employment Development Department (EDD), who also serves residents of the surrounding neighborhood. Jobs-Plus is also staffed by residents participating in HACLA's Work Experience Program, the goal of which is to provide paid on-the-job training in such areas as office management, community-building, clerical skills, and janitorial, construction, and maintenance work. Until Imperial Courts was fully staffed in March 2000, HACLA relied heavily on work experience positions to fill staff vacancies and assist in program delivery. Currently, two work experience residents serve as office assistants, one as a maintenance worker, and one as a youth activities assistant. Previously, two residents worked as community-builders for the Time Dollar program in the community support for work component (discussed later). A resident intern assists the clerk-typist, and one college intern assists members of the staff with administrative tasks.

Facilities

The Jobs-Plus office is located in two converted housing units at Imperial Courts. Other organizations, including Project Build and the Resident Advisory Council (RAC), have offices in the same apartment complex; the Drug Elimination Program (DEP) was also located next door to Jobs-Plus until its offices closed in early 2000. Altogether, service providers occupy six units in the building.

The Jobs-Plus Site Coordinator, core staff, and a majority of the work experience participants are located in this main office, which has a small workroom area where job leads and resources are posted and where residents can access job search information or fill out applications. A 4-H Youth Center, which closed in November 1999 for renovations, is located directly across the street and is adjacent to the site where the gym is under construction. Additionally, the housing authority has purchased land across the street from the Jobs-Plus office and plans to build a licensed child care center that will be run by Kedren, one of Los Angeles County's largest child care providers. The building will also house other on-site social service agencies.

Three blocks away from the main Jobs-Plus office and located in the center of the development is Imperial Courts' Head Start program and the Computer Learning Center (CLC). The CLC is staffed and managed by the housing authority and includes a computer lab, additional office space, and a conference room that accommodates up to 50 people. Jobs-Plus staff including the outstationed GAIN caseworker have offices here, and the conference room is used for group orientations, assessment, and staff and collaborative meetings. In the computer lab, residents can access computer-based English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and can get general computer and keyboarding assistance. Homework assistance and computer tutorials are available after school for resident youth.

Program Flow

The following sections describe the major activities that Jobs-Plus offers to residents of Imperial Courts.

Recruitment

Realizing that no single outreach method would appeal to every resident at Imperial Courts, Jobs-Plus recruitment strategies have evolved over the first two years of the program to

include a range of techniques aimed at reaching the maximum number of residents. While Jobs-Plus staff have not systematically analyzed which efforts and incentives are most likely to bring residents into the program, they are convinced that a combination of methods will contribute to successful recruitment.

Door-to-door outreach has always been a key part of the recruitment strategy. In order to build a sense of "legitimacy" for Jobs-Plus within the development early on, staff engaged well-established resident groups, advocates, and service providers — such as the Resident Advisory Council, Friends-on-the-Inside, Mothers Reclaiming Our Children (Mothers ROC), F.A.C.E.S (Focusing and Endorsing Ethnic Solidarity), and the Veterans Administration — to assist in door-to-door outreach efforts. Flyers and informational material about Jobs-Plus are also distributed with residents' monthly rent notices.

Jobs-Plus management also realized that residents would be more likely to seek services if they viewed the program as valuing their involvement in the design and delivery of services and if they were made to feel more comfortable by coming to an office where their neighbors and peers were represented on the staff. Indeed, HACLA places a high value on hiring residents at all its housing developments, in an effort both to increase the skills and capacity of residents and to involve residents in implementing the programs that are created to serve them. Thus, in addition to hiring residents as full-time staff, Jobs-Plus also provides paid, on-site, on-the-job training opportunities for residents through HACLA's Work Experience Program. Eight residents have taken advantage of this program to date.

In order to reach the growing Latino population at Imperial Courts, staff have increased efforts to ensure that information is accessible by translating all outreach flyers and announcements into Spanish. Two full-time Spanish-speaking staff, including the Site Coordinator, have also recently been hired.

From the beginning of the program, community awareness events have played an important role in Jobs-Plus's efforts to engage residents. Jobs-Plus and the Resident Advisory Council co-sponsored the first grand-opening event on a sunny Saturday afternoon in the spring of 1998. Using an "Employment Train" theme, the Jobs-Plus "Express" rolled into Imperial Courts featuring music, food, and children's games. Collaborative members set up information booths to showcase Jobs-Plus services available to residents. Representatives of the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) provided information on the GAIN and CalWORKs programs, and resource information was provided by the Department of Mental Health, Kulick Youth Demonstration Project, Compton Community College, Watts Learning Center, and IAM CARES. Both the housing authority and its Police Division also attended. Approximately 200 residents turned out for the event, and they appeared receptive to having an employment-focused program in their community. It was noted, however, that no employers were present at this event; also missing were some of the on-site service organizations run by current and former residents, such as Friends-on-the-Inside and Mothers ROC.

Since the grand-opening event, Jobs-Plus at Imperial Courts has sponsored and has been represented at a number of community fairs centered on such themes as jobs, education, and health. Jobs-Plus has regularly secured funding from the Drug Elimination Program for community events, and in the past year it has worked with DEP to sponsor a health fair, a back-to-school celebration, and an Imperial Courts clean-up day. While community fairs and

celebrations are designed to raise residents' awareness about certain issues and to increase access to resources, these events also provide an important forum for residents to interact with each other. Jobs-Plus staff feel that such pleasant, informal gatherings of community members help counteract the social isolation that is common among public housing residents; the events provide an opportunity to build trust among the development's various ethnic groups.

Finally, word-of-mouth endorsements of the program by residents have been important in efforts to recruit new participants. According to the Site Coordinator, this places a great responsibility on the staff to provide effective services and to follow through with residents. Although Jobs-Plus staff and partners cannot completely control the reputation of the program, they utilize this informal word-of-mouth network to tap into as many resident populations as possible and to gain trust and support from the community. Staff members engage new Jobs-Plus enrollees in this process as well, encouraging them to pass along information to their neighbors and asking for names of other residents who might be interested in the program.

Intake

A resident of Imperial Courts who comes to Jobs-Plus to sign up for services must complete a three-step enrollment process: intake, orientation, and assessment. Intake involves meeting with a Case Manager, and while this step has evolved over the life of the program, it has always been viewed by staff and management as a forum for gathering initial information from the resident and, in turn, for providing basic information to the resident about Jobs-Plus services. According to the Site Coordinator, intake has always been "unstructured." While in some respects this has worked to the program's advantage (in that residents are not restricted to signing up only at prescripted times), the Site Coordinator has recently formalized some aspects of intake to ensure, for example, that information is gathered consistently and that residents are scheduled for orientation in a timely manner.

Intake is performed on a drop-in basis and is generally facilitated one-on-one by the Case Manager. Residents generally take about 30 minutes to complete a one-page intake form that asks for basic information (such as name and address, welfare receipt status, education level, and past participation in other employment or training programs) and also records the interests that the resident would like to pursue through Jobs-Plus. Information gathered during intake is logged into a tracking form that is used for reporting purposes, and the Case Manager creates a client file for each resident.

The intake information focuses on service needs; staff ask only for minimal personal information and do not insist on seeing official documentation such as a Social Security card until the applicant meets later with the Job Developer or Case Manager. Staff feel that this low-key approach minimizes intimidation of the applicant, who may be concerned about disclosing certain information, such as undocumented resident status. However, failure to insist on personal identification up front may delay the inevitable need to discuss and address barriers to work, including undocumented status. Residents also point out that it is unlikely that undocumented individuals would approach Jobs-Plus for assistance in finding a job.

After a resident completes the intake form, the Case Manager reviews it briefly and asks whether the person has any special needs that Jobs-Plus can address. Sometimes a resident wants to begin a job search immediately, before completing orientation and assessment; if so, the Case Manager introduces the resident to the Job Developer. In some cases, a resident at intake can also

access transportation assistance for job search activities. After intake is complete, all new enrollees are registered for group orientation.

Orientation

From the beginning of Jobs-Plus at Imperial Courts until August 1999, orientation — the second step in the enrollment process — was conducted on an informal, one-on-one basis, much like intake. When a resident came to the Jobs-Plus offices to inquire about services or to enroll, staff members would describe, to the best of their ability, the program and its services.

In August 1999, the Project Director, the Site Coordinator, and the caseworkers reassessed this process and decided to begin offering a group orientation on set days of the week, so that residents who had completed intake could complete orientation within a week or two. Still a voluntary activity like all other Jobs-Plus activities, biweekly orientations now take place on Monday morning and last about an hour-and-a-half. Recent sessions have included 6 to 10 new enrollees.

Group orientation sessions are held in the Computer Learning Center conference room. Residents are presented with a general introduction to Jobs-Plus services and to the staff, who give brief descriptions of their roles and responsibilities. Staff members emphasize that the program focuses on connecting residents with employment and helping residents prepare to enter the labor market with the confidence, skills, and support that they need to sustain work. The session also covers what is expected of program participants. Staff from colocated social service agencies, community agencies, or employers make presentations at the end of the orientation. Jobs-Plus staff feel that their involvement is important in emphasizing the range of services and employment opportunities available through the program.

Staff also observe that the group orientation sessions are an important opportunity to communicate accurate information to residents about Jobs-Plus, given that misinformation about the program spreads quickly through the development. For example, when Jobs-Plus was first established at Imperial Courts, many residents understood it to be a program that hired and paid residents directly to perform a particular type of work, similar to many of the paid on-the-job training programs run by the City of Los Angeles's JTPA program. Consequently, a number of residents — particularly those with felony records, who often have difficulty securing employment — approached the program thinking they would be hired on the spot, and they were resentful when they discovered that Jobs-Plus itself could directly employ very few residents and instead offered job preparation services. To short-circuit such misperceptions about Jobs-Plus, group orientations stress that an important purpose of the program is to help residents acquire skills in job preparation and job search that will be useful in seeking both short- and long-term employment.

Assessment

Immediately following the group orientation, residents complete the third step in the enrollment process: assessment. This step is also conducted in the Computer Learning Center, and residents complete two assessments: the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System CASSAS), which evaluates educational skill levels; and the Individual Self Strategy (ISS) Plan, which measures employment interests and skills and is the same test used by the GAIN/CalWORKs programs and JTPA. The tests are usually given in English, but to better meet

the needs of Spanish-speaking residents, staff are in the process of determining whether the assessments can also be provided in Spanish.

Once the assessment is finished, residents are encouraged to return to the Jobs-Plus office the following day to review the results and go over the employment interest information from the ISS with their Case Manager. This one-on-one meeting is an opportunity for the Case Manager to discuss both the resident's employment strengths and any areas the resident may need to work on before beginning the job search process. Based on this information, the Case Manager can make resource suggestions and referrals to programs that meet the resident's specific needs and goals. In some cases, the assessments show a need for additional skill training, such as a GED; however, some residents choose not to pursue education immediately, opting instead to begin their job search as soon as possible. While staff emphasize the importance of training for long-term employment and earnings, the Case Manager and resident together create and agree to a plan based on the ISS that sets out the resident's employment goals; both of them sign this plan.

Employment and Training Services

This section summarizes some of the key activities that Jobs-Plus uses to help residents secure employment. As of the end of November 1999, the program reported that it had successfully placed 111 residents in jobs, all but one full time.

Jobs-Plus employment and training activities are voluntary, and most employment and training services at Imperial Courts are provided in a one-on-one setting, with the occasional exception of recruitment sessions held by a particular employer such as Krispy Kreme Donuts or the U.S. Census Bureau. HACLA's Executive Director and the Project Director have intentionally taken this less structured approach to service delivery, which links residents to existing resources in the community, in order to avoid assembling a large staff and adhere to a more rigid structure.

On-Site Job Preparation, Job Readiness, and Job Search Activities. In contrast to the practice of many welfare and employment programs, Jobs-Plus at Imperial Courts does not offer group job preparation classes, group job search, or job club. Residents come to the office at their convenience and meet with the Job Developer for preemployment assistance, such as résumé writing and filling out applications. Staff see this informal approach to job preparation activities as advantageous because many residents have gone through numerous employment programs and are highly skeptical about their effectiveness. Offering more structured activities might remind residents of other programs that have had little or no effect on their job prospects. Rather than offering a set of services that residents may view as "more of the same," Jobs-Plus staff hope that this more personalized approach to working with residents — with its emphasis on meeting individual needs, interests, and goals — will give residents the sense that they are making a fresh start.

The Project Director and Job Developer also point out that residents can come to the office and learn from other residents who are at different stages in the job search process. For example, during intake a new participant can interact with other residents who are doing job search in the workroom, searching for jobs on the database, or making phone calls to potential employers; or they may talk with a working resident who stops by to check in with a Case Manager. In this way, working residents "model" for other residents the skills and behaviors that lead to successful employment. Staff feel that this is an important part of the learning process.

Realizing that residents may not always stay with their first job, all staff, and particularly the Job Developer, emphasize that Jobs-Plus has an "open-door policy" and that residents can return for services and assistance even when they are working or if they have lost or left a job. Residents are encouraged to take advantage of resources in the Computer Learning Center. At any point in their participation in Jobs-Plus, they can upgrade their skills, access help in preparing or updating a résumé, or get coaching for job interviews.

Off-Site Employment Preparation, Education, and Training Services. Though Jobs-Plus has a general inclination toward offering individualized services, the Project Director and Job Developer acknowledge that some residents may need or prefer a more structured environment to help them become job-ready. Staff note this is particularly true for resident youth, who have less work experience and education and can gain many skills through peer-to-peer learning. Jobs-Plus has thus developed relationships and partnerships with such organizations as the Maxine Waters Skill Center, On-Your-Feet, Chrysalis, GAIN/CalWORKs, and the Kulick Youth Demonstration Program — all of which offer job readiness and job seeking opportunities in a more structured and traditional setting. Both GAIN and Kulick have staff outstationed at Jobs-Plus who offer on-site case management and facilitate the referral process and follow up with residents who are receiving services at their main offices.

The housing authority's Executive Director has not established a rigid work-first policy for Jobs-Plus, focusing rather on the long-term goal of helping residents move into "good-paying jobs" that lead to economic self-sufficiency. Training is emphasized as key to increasing residents' earning capacity. In fact, as of the end of November 1999, 90 Jobs-Plus participants had participated in some type of education program, and 65 had been engaged in skills training. Jobs-Plus staff strongly emphasize connecting residents to education and training opportunities, and they have established both collaborative and contractual relationships with local training programs and community colleges. For example, Jobs-Plus refers participants to Compton Community College for child care training; to the Maxine Waters Skill Center, which offers soft-skills employment training; and to Southwest College and Jordan-Locke schools for GED preparation and adult basic education. HACLA has contracts with Pacific Oaks College's Nursing Assistant training program and the East L.A. Skills Center to help public housing residents at Imperial Courts and other developments access and pay for these training programs.

Jobs-Plus and HACLA have some funds available to pay for residents' training, but these monies are limited. When a participant expresses interest in pursuing education, Jobs-Plus Case Managers first try to identify outside funding sources that residents may be eligible for, such as JTPA, GAIN, or federal financial aid. If no outside funds can be located, the resident's Case Manager can then request funds from HACLA to cover the cost of tuition, books, and supplies. Such a request must be approved first by the Site Coordinator and then by the Project Director and HALCA. Case Managers work with residents throughout the enrollment process and, when possible, provide referrals to specific admissions staff with whom Jobs-Plus has established relationships. In the interest of encouraging residents to be actively involved in planning their own training or educational pursuits, however, residents have to visit the school or training center in person to fill out forms and applications.

Youth Employment. Connecting Imperial Courts youth to education, work, and social programs has been a priority for Jobs-Plus since the early stages of the program, and staff see their efforts in the area of youth activities and employment as having the dual purpose of

providing supervised and constructive activity and fostering an early work ethic among resident youth, which they hope will spread to the community at large. The Project Director observes: "When you look at the people who need employment chances now, many are the young people in Imperial. If we had reached some of the older residents when they were just starting to look for work Imperial probably would have more people employed today. So, we have to focus on the young residents to make Jobs-Plus work. Getting them jobs today helps us create a healthier and employment-focused community."

Jobs-Plus has a collaborative relationship with the City of Los Angeles's Summer Youth at Work Program (SYWP), a Department of Labor (DOL)-funded program that provides stipends for summer work experience positions. In the spring of 1999, Jobs-Plus Case Managers at Imperial Courts focused on intensive door-to-door outreach as part of their strategy to recruit youth into this program. In general, it has not been unusual over the last two years to see staff approach a group of young men in the development to ask whether they would be interested in enrolling in Jobs-Plus or SYWP to gain work experience. SYWP has offered computer and Internet training and instruction in creating sophisticated multimedia Web pages and computer-related designs — skills that are particularly relevant to helping resident youth enter the job market, given the current expansion of media-related jobs taking place in Los Angeles.

Starting in early 1999, the Kulick Youth Demonstration Project has been a key provider of services for youth at Jobs-Plus. Run by the City of Los Angeles' Community Development Department, Kulick is a DOL-funded program that targets out-of-school youth ages 16 to 24 and provides education, GED courses, employment preparation, and job placement. Kulick agreed to collocate a staff person one day per week on-site at Jobs-Plus in early 1999, with the goal of enrolling 50 Imperial Courts youth in its programs. By the end of the year, enrollments had approached 100, and staff members report that Kulick's presence at Jobs-Plus continues to be a key factor in their ability to recruit resident youth.

One collaborative effort in which Jobs-Plus takes particular pride is the UCLA Teen Works Program, which is managed by UCLA's Community-Based Learning Department and funded by Jobs-Plus and HACLA. From October to June, UCLA Teen Works offers mentoring, education, and life skills enhancement to young people ages 14 to 19. Two UCLA college students have operated this program on-site two days a week; they focused on developing mentor-type relationships with Imperial Courts youth and provided education-focused life skills coaching, such as résumé writing, helping residents gear their high school coursework toward preparing for college, and introducing them to the world of higher education. The program also offered field trips to local museums and cultural institutions such as Watts Towers and emphasized cultural awareness by overseeing Black History Month activities organized and run by resident youth.

To highlight the effort that UCLA and other DOL-funded youth programs have made in low-income neighborhoods, and to recognize the accomplishments of the youth who have participated in these programs, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor held a meeting with a group of neighborhood youth at the nearby Markum Middle School in September 1999. Secretary Herman stressed that this type of partnership exemplifies what is meant by the "youth employment movement."

Job Development

When Jobs-Plus began offering services in 1998, HACLA funded one full-time Job Developer position that was shared between Imperial Courts and William Mead Homes. In July 1999, HACLA received additional DOL funding for Job Developers and established full-time positions at both sites, intensifying the job development and job preparation services available to residents. And as of January 2000, Jobs-Plus also has a colocated job developer from the State of California's Economic Development Department (EDD) who is on-site at Imperial Courts full time. Through EDD, residents have access to the computerized statewide CALJobs system, which posts job openings before they are made widely available to the public.

Both Job Developers provide job preparation services for residents, such as résumé writing, assistance with filling out applications, and interview coaching; and they aggressively pursue job leads for residents. One Job Developer who has succeeded in connecting residents with smaller employers feels that the executive collaborative could focus more attention on developing hiring relationships with large employers, such as Los Angeles International Airport, United Parcel Service, and FedEx. Such employment links require connections to higher-level human resource staff than he is able to create, and they might be better pursued using HACLA's connection to the city's Workforce Development Department.

The job development staff have, however, been successful in bringing several large-scale recruitment efforts to Imperial Courts, including hiring for Krispy Kreme Donuts, the Alameda Corridor project, and the U.S. Census Bureau. Krispy Kreme opened a new production site just north of Imperial Courts in Huntington Park in the summer of 1999. Residents expressed enthusiasm about applying for these jobs, both because the location is an easy public transit ride from the development and because the company offered full health benefits after successful completion of a 90-day probation period. The Job Developers worked with HACLA's Welfare-to-Work Department to connect Imperial Courts residents to a JTPA-funded soft-skills training program, which also prepared participants for Krispy Kreme's intensive interview process. On-site orientation and application sessions were conducted by job development staff, who also coordinated transportation for residents to and from interviews.

Similarly, Job Developers were successful in establishing relationships with hiring personnel for the Alameda Corridor project, a multimillion-dollar underground freight rail link between the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. Contractors with the Alameda Corridor project were required to train 1,000 residents and meet a goal of hiring 30 percent of the workers from neighborhoods bordering the Alameda Corridor, which includes the area in which Imperial Courts is located. Jobs-Plus staff made special efforts to recommend residents to the construction apprenticeship program. Job Developers also worked with local recruiters from the U.S. Census Bureau to organize on-site recruitment, interviews, and orientations for residents seeking Field Enumerator and other positions.

In addition to on-site recruitment efforts with individual employers, job fairs have been another key job development strategy at Imperial Courts. Job Developers have organized fairs on-site for both adult and youth residents, and they do door-to-door outreach to advertise off-site job fairs to residents; Jobs-Plus also coordinates van transportation to such events.

Job Creation

Work Experience Positions

As noted above, HACLA places a high value on hiring residents internally, as a way both to build individual residents' skills and employability and to increase their involvement in the housing authority's program design and implementation. To that end, HACLA funds the Work Experience Program, which provides residents with paid on-the-job training positions at all HACLA developments. All residents are eligible to apply for work experience positions that allow 25 paid hours of work experience per week, up to a total of 300 hours.

As noted, HACLA relied heavily on work experience participants to staff Jobs-Plus in the early days of the program, before it was fully staffed. As more full-time positions were created and staffed, HACLA scaled back on work experience positions in mid-1999. The Site Coordinator saw this as an opportunity to improve the quality of work experience training at Jobs-Plus, because having fewer work experience participants at one time was actually ideal: The level of coaching and supervision that residents needed was in many cases time-consuming for staff. She also focused the program toward those residents with minimal work histories so that they would have the opportunity to develop employment skills in a supportive setting.

To better match residents' skills and interests to the type of work they were able to supervise, the Site Coordinator and staff created job descriptions for work experience positions, and an interview panel was established that included regular full-time staff and the president of the Resident Advisory Council. Staff used the interview process as a forum for residents to practice their interviewing skills, and they gave residents feedback on their job readiness and interviewing skills. The Site Coordinator reports that this process has also been useful for the staff, by helping them to understand what type of preemployment coaching residents need. And staff report that it has been enlightening to see that while many residents do have barriers to employment, they also have skills and experience that staff can draw out during the job search process, as a way to increase residents' self-esteem and confidence.

Once a resident is placed in a work experience position, a Jobs-Plus staff person is assigned to be their "coach," and the Site Coordinator also meets regularly with the resident. The resident receives daily feedback and encouragement and every two weeks fills out a more formal evaluation with the coach and the Site Coordinator. At the end of the work experience assignment, staff help the resident create or update a résumé and assist the person in identifying and following up job leads.

To date, eight residents have participated in the Work Experience Program at Jobs-Plus, and approximately 70 percent of these residents have made the transition into permanent positions with greater responsibility.

Entrepreneurial Activities

From the outset, Job-Plus at Imperial Courts has tried to help participants develop business skills and start their own businesses. For example, Jobs-Plus has provided technical assistance to the Resident Advisory Council (RAC) in the area of leadership development as the RAC works with the Leadership Unit at HACLA to apply for 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status. RAC members look forward to completing the application process, and as the RAC president

points out, nonprofit status "will allow us to start our own business and we will be able to hire residents to do a lot of the work." The president envisions creating a moving company and a gardening maintenance company, both owned and operated by Imperial Courts residents. The RAC and HACLA report that the 501(c)(3) application is pending.

In the interim, Jobs-Plus has worked with HACLA to build the RAC's leadership capacity and management skills, with the goal of preparing RAC members to run a resident business once their nonprofit status is approved. Jobs-Plus, for example, is developing the Resident Leadership Fellowship Program in conjunction with Community Partners, a Los Angeles-based technical assistance provider. The fellowship program will provide RAC members with formal paid training in community-building and development.

Another job creation strategy that Jobs-Plus and HACLA have developed jointly is an entrepreneurial program, part of the federally funded Youth Entrepreneurial Demonstration Institute (YEDI), which provides educational and financial resources to help both resident adults and youth open and operate a small business. Residents who participated in this program were given formal instruction in entrepreneurship and were coached in the process of conceptualizing a business idea and creating a business plan to attract financing. Using resources from a significant loan fund, the program has made loans of up to $5,000 to graduates. At least one Imperial Courts resident received a $5,000 award to help start a candy store and purchase an ice-cream truck.

Job Retention and Advancement

Thus far, Jobs-Plus has focused primarily on developing outreach strategies to recruit residents, and then on connecting them to the employment and training services that will help them find jobs. According to the Project Director, the staff have focused most heavily on preparing residents for work, by providing job preparation and addressing barriers to employment. Consequently, according to staff, job retention and advancement have so far not been given a high priority. The Job Developer believes that the program will be in a better position to focus on retention and advancement once staff have had more experience serving participants who have found positions or left their first jobs.

Support Services

Child Care

Child care options for Imperial Courts residents have historically been limited, though many residents have access to child care assistance, primarily through the GAIN welfare-to-work program. The Head Start program located on-site at Imperial Courts provides one child care option, though residents report that Head Start is structured to care for children in 3-hour shifts only, which is not generally an option for parents who work full time.

Residents have been vocal about the need for on-site child care resources that allow parents (particularly those who cannot leave their children in the care of family members during the day) to go to work without first transporting their children to caregivers at prohibitive distances. To respond to this need, HACLA recently purchased land adjacent to the development and has started construction on a new child care center. When the center is complete, Los

Angeles's largest child care provider, Kedren, has been contracted to provide a full range of services for Imperial Courts. Initial development plans called for a temporary, portable building to be located on-site and staffed by Kedren until the new facility could be completed. To date, this has not happened. The Site Coordinator reports that the permanent center is set to open sometime in late 2000.

Jobs-Plus has made some progress in increasing residents' access to additional child care assistance and providers. In conjunction with Jobs-Plus, HACLA makes child care stipends available to participants who are engaged in education or training or are in the first two or three months of a new job. Stipends provide $10 per day per child for a maximum of $600 for any one employment and training activity; although this is helpful during the job search process, it does not meet residents' long-term child care needs.

Some limited after-school care was available at Imperial Courts at the 4H Center until the building closed for renovation in November 1999. One of the oldest service providers at Imperial Courts, 4H offered homework assistance and other activities, such as arts and crafts, to resident children.

Transportation

As is the case in much of Los Angeles, transportation between Imperial Courts and areas of major economic activity such as downtown can be time-consuming and expensive without a car. The city's light rail lines run close to the development; and while staff report that these are heavily used by residents, the areas that they access are limited. Although buses are also available near Imperial Courts, the Site Coordinator notes that traveling by bus can take an hour or more — and longer, if one has to transfer lines in order to get to an appointment or job.

Jobs-Plus has two rail and bus token funds to help residents with transportation expenses. One, funded by the housing authority, provides transportation tokens to residents who are enrolled in Jobs-Plus for use in relation to job search or traveling to an education or training program. The second, funded by the First AME Church (FAME), also provides tokens, but these are available to all residents and are not restricted to employment-related activities; they can be used for other transportation needs, such as grocery shopping and traveling to medical appointments or meetings with off-site caseworkers. FAME provides Jobs-Plus with a monthly allotment of 300 tokens and requires residents to fill out a simple form giving contact information, which Jobs-Plus staff return to FAME at the end of each month.

The Site Coordinator reports that as Jobs-Plus began serving larger numbers of residents, staff had to establish some restrictions on when residents could receive transportation assistance and how much they could receive at one time. A more structured approach was put into place to reduce what the Site Coordinator termed "a chaotic distribution procedure" wherein some residents would receive a disproportionate number of tokens while other residents received none. To ensure that all residents have equal access to transportation assistance, Jobs-Plus instituted a limit of 10 tokens per month per resident; Case Managers keep track of the number of tokens that residents receive.

Jobs-Plus occasionally has access to HACLA vans and buses to transport residents to various employment, cultural, and educational activities. Job Developers make the most frequent use of the vans, to take residents to off-site job fairs or recruitment events, and they also drive

individual residents to job interviews if this is arranged several days in advance. Staff have also provided emergency transportation to residents, though on a limited basis, for non-employment-related appointments. Efforts are under way to secure a van dedicated full time to Jobs-Plus, and staff observe that this would be a welcome addition to the program; it would make it easier for residents to conduct a job search, and Jobs-Plus could hire some residents as drivers.

Clothing

Jobs-Plus provides a modest allowance for residents who are not able to purchase interview-appropriate clothing or uniforms required for a job. As with funds for training, Case Managers first explore whether a resident might be eligible for clothing assistance through another program, such as GAIN. Jobs-Plus also receives 10 vouchers each month for use at a used-clothing distribution center at California State University-Dominguez Hills; these are distributed before using the Jobs-Plus vouchers.

If outside funds cannot be located, the Case Manager submits a clothing voucher request for the resident, which must be approved by the Site Coordinator and the Project Director. This one-time voucher can be used at Sears or Ross: Dress for Less. Once the voucher request is approved, the Case Manager accompanies the resident to the store and assists in selecting work-appropriate items. Early on in Jobs-Plus, Case Managers advertised this service to residents as a way to promote participation in the program. However, the Site Coordinator noted that word of the clothing vouchers, which at that time amounted to approximately $300 each, spread quickly through the development. As with transportation assistance, staff decided that the distribution of clothing vouchers had to be structured in order to provide equal access to assistance and to provide the service to a larger number of residents. Each clothing voucher was reduced to a maximum of $150 per resident, and residents have to meet with a Case Manager and demonstrate that they need clothing for employment purposes, such as a job interview. This system went into effect in mid-1999.

Other Support Services

Jobs-Plus and its collaborative members at Imperial Courts are concerned about aspects of the community environment, such as incidents of violence, that impact on residents' physical and mental well-being. Residents have noted that while violence has decreased somewhat at the development in recent years, Imperial Courts still experiences incidents of random violence and police sweeps, and there have been both official and unofficial reports of violence against women.

To address the effects of violence on individuals and the community at large, Jobs-Plus and collaborative members have brought professional mental health and counseling resources into the community. As noted, staff from the nearby Augustus Hawkins Mental Health Clinic are colocated on-site twice a week. Mental health specialists from the Department of Mental Health, St. Francis Hospital, and HACLA's Employee Assistance Services Program have also volunteered their time to hold discussions with residents individually and in small groups about the effects that violence has on them and their children. Other specialists, working with on-site groups such as Friends-on-the-Inside and Mothers ROC, have set up support groups to discuss issues and strategies for dealing with domestic violence. To reach veterans who live at Imperial Courts and to inform them of available services and benefits, Jobs-Plus has worked with HACLA's Department of Housing Management and the Veterans Administration to do door-to-

door outreach. And to address issues of drug use and addiction at Imperial Courts, Jobs-Plus has worked closely with Prototypes — a local nonprofit organization that provides drug treatment and services to persons with HIV — to sponsor health fairs and informational presentations to residents who might be facing these challenges. In early 1999, Prototypes also began facilitating an on-site support group for women; this continues to meet and averages 12 attendees weekly.

Financial Incentives

The program's rent incentives plan was submitted to HUD in April 1998, approved in November 1999, and scheduled for implementation in June 2000. Staff members report that residents have felt considerable frustration about delays in implementing the rent incentives component of Jobs-Plus services.

Although funding for the rent incentives had not yet been secured by HUD, Jobs-Plus and staff from HACLA's departments of Resident Relations, Housing Management, Planning, Management Information Services (MIS), and Finance began working on their implementation plan in December 1999. The plan developed by the financial incentives team calls for a two-part rent structure that begins with a rent freeze and shifts to a long-term flat rent. During the period of the freeze, residents either will have their rents frozen for 18 months, if they are paying less than the proposed flat rent, or will have their rents reduced to the proposed flat rent, if they are employed or in a training program and paying more. After 18 months, residents whose rents were frozen will see the levels increase to the flat rent.

The incentives plan includes several features that complement the flat-rent structure. First, when previously unemployed residents become eligible for the rent incentives, they can accumulate rent credits if they work or enroll in a training program. During the first year of the incentives, they can accumulate one-twelfth of the value of their rent in credit for every month they are employed or in training. Thus, the credit's maximum value amounts to one month of free rent that can be cashed in at any time during the subsequent year. Second, residents who would pay a lower rent may choose the traditional income-based rent calculation (30 percent of income) rather than the flat rent. This safety net feature ensures that residents will not pay rents that they cannot afford.

The rent structure is tied to TANF regulations: Residents who receive the flat rent can have their rent reduced if they lose earnings or income *unless* they are sanctioned under TANF for noncompliance. If sanctioned by the CalWORKs system, residents are required to return to paying the flat rent, although the Site Coordinator notes that Jobs-Plus is not currently set up to do this level of tracking.

As the program prepares to implement the rent incentives, controversy has arisen over two issues of contention at Imperial Courts — housing of individuals not officially on the apartment lease and unreported income. The Housing Management Department is responsible for completing a mandatory rent certification on an annual basis, or whenever a resident begins working, has a change in income or benefits, or allows another person to move into the unit. Since the level of rent is determined by these factors, residents are required to promptly report any changes in status to the Housing Management Department — an office that residents generally see as a "policing" unit. Although it is unclear to what extent such things occur, there

are residents who work "under the table" without reporting income and who house friends or family members without adding them to the lease, as a cost-saving measure. Residents fear that they could face eviction if these activities or disclosure of a barrier to employment, such as a drug problem, were communicated to the department by Jobs-Plus staff.

The RAC has requested clarification of the information-sharing and confidentiality policies for both Jobs-Plus and HACLA, but they have had little success. Staff report that this potential "conflict of interest" between residents and Jobs-Plus has made it difficult to engage certain members of the community. The Site Coordinator notes that Jobs-Plus staff have had particular difficulty engaging the development's Latino community because of the fear that Jobs-Plus will disclose a resident's undocumented status to authorities.

Some residents on the Rent Incentives Committee have been requesting that the Department of Housing Management allow them to add additional adults to their leases without increasing their rent and that information given in connection with the incentives program be kept confidential. The department's Housing Manager insists that he must abide by the regulations that require him to screen any new amendments to the lease and that the screening must include checks for criminal backgrounds, undocumented resident status, and public assistance status. As of this writing, the issue had not been resolved.

Community Support for Work

The community support for work effort has evolved slowly at Imperial Courts, from early efforts at hosting large-scale community events that would increase Jobs-Plus's visibility at the development to activities focused specifically on building work-oriented social networks. Because residents report experiencing a high degree of isolation from one another (which staff say is particularly pronounced in the development's Latino community), the Site Coordinator states that Jobs-Plus took the approach of providing nonthreatening social activities as a way for residents to meet and interact with each other — realizing that residents would need this kind of informal social connection before they would feel comfortable asking each other for help sharing child care or rides to work. Thus, building on residents' positive response to Jobs-Plus's grand-opening celebration, staff and collaborative partners have hosted a series of community-wide fairs featuring music, food, information booths on such topics as youth services and health, and holiday theme events and back-to-school celebrations.

In late 1998, attempts to bring more a more formal approach to community supports for work began with the introduction of the Time Dollar program at Imperial Courts. The Time Dollar Institute is a Washington, DC-based nonprofit corporation that promotes the concept of allowing volunteers to earn tax exempt credits — "time dollars"— for providing services to others. Then credits either can be used to purchase other services that the volunteers themselves need or can be given to people or organizations with a need for certain types of volunteer work. For example, a volunteer tutor might earn time dollars with which to pay someone to look after a bedridden parent or an ailing neighbor.

Jobs-Plus staff worked with the RAC to bring the Time Dollar program to Imperial Courts as a community-building strategy. Technical assistance was provided to the RAC by staff from the Time Dollar Institute, and two resident work experience participants were hired to

cocoordinate the program. The co-coordinators held orientation meetings with residents to explain the system. However, residents' response to the Time Dollar program was not positive enough to justify staffing the program, and it was terminated at the end of 1999.

Another community-building activity that Jobs-Plus brought to Imperial Courts, with the encouragement of some of its younger residents, is the Let's Work aerobic class. The class was created in part to compensate for the loss of the gym facility, and it grew out of a resident's suggestion that Jobs-Plus offer an incentive to engage with the world of work while improving physical health and well-being. The resident worked with the community organizer to recruit a volunteer aerobics instructor from 25 Hour Fitness; the instructor was also a former resident of Imperial Courts, which put her in a unique position to be a positive role model. The organizers also worked with the Department of Housing Management and the Jobs-Plus Project Director to make sure that the class was covered for liabilities.

Let's Work began in August 1999, holding weekly hour-long sessions. Initial response from residents was enthusiastic, and participation ranged from 20 to 30 men and 20 to 30 women per session. The Let's Work classes include messages about the virtues and challenges of work and how overall physical health is important to keeping a job. The instructor also discusses how a healthy body can improve one's mental outlook and work disposition. Staff note that, for some residents, the Let's Work class provides an important forum for positive social interaction and reduces feelings of isolation and fear; this is an important step in moving residents into the workforce.

Another work-related aspect of Let's Work is that the instructor has agreed to mentor prospective aerobic teachers. Students who want to be aerobic instructors can learn from the current instructor, and in their free time they can seek additional training. If the residents follow this plan, they can become certified within a year and then can help instruct the class for the following six months. After that time they will be certified to teach the class on their own. One or two residents are considering this training option.

More recent community supports for work have focused on building resident leadership capacity at Imperial Courts and on encouraging residents to identify areas for improvement, such as expanding youth activities and reducing crime. To that end, the Project Director has developed the Resident Leadership Fellowship Program to provide formal paid training in community-building and leadership. The program is set to begin in the spring of 2000.

Conclusions

Although Jobs-Plus at Imperial Courts has experienced both a slow start-up and a high degree of turnover among management and staff, it has managed to begin developing and implementing all three program components. The program has managed to sustain itself, although observers generally agree that it could move ahead decisively only after the arrival of the new Site Coordinator in July 1999. As staff work to build momentum for Jobs-Plus, they have several assets to draw on, including the rent incentives beginning in June 2000. The upcoming months will reveal whether these incentives draw more residents into becoming active participants in Jobs-Plus.

Chapter 7

Jobs-Plus in St. Paul

Sandy Gerber[13]

Program Highlights

Located at the Mt. Airy Homes housing development, Jobs-Plus in St. Paul serves a resident population of many different ethnic backgrounds and countries of origin. Several features of the program accommodate this diversity: Orientations have been translated into Hmong, Vietnamese, and Cambodian. Interpreters are available for speakers of other languages. Language compatibility is a main consideration in determining which staff member serves as Case Manager for a participant; and an English as a Second Language (ESL) class is offered on-site.

Part of an array of services available to residents at the on-site Mt. Airy Community Center, Jobs-Plus expands preexisting employment and training services in the housing development. The program, which hired its first Program Manager in June 2000, had been managed by a core group of collaborative member organizations, several of which have dedicated significant resources to the program and the Mt. Airy community. The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, a philanthropic institution that is also a service provider in St. Paul, is the employer of several Jobs-Plus staff members. The St. Paul Public Schools have contributed the services of a Job Counselor and the on-site GED instructor.

The St. Paul Public Housing Agency (PHA) has remodeled space in the Mt. Airy Community Center to provide a Career Resource Room and computer lab for program participants. The Career Resource Room offers access to Internet job listings and other resources such as telephones for contacting employers.

Before the Job Developer left in November 1999, all staff worked with her to identify prospective employers. Although job development progress has been slow, staff efforts included participating in local associations such as Chambers of Commerce and a network of Job Developers. The program's main job creation effort has been to help a small group of residents become in-home daycare providers at Mt. Airy.

Although the service is currently underutilized, program participants are eligible to use subsidized child care, including after-school care, at a licensed facility in the Mt. Airy Community Center. A Jobs-Plus community asset mapping activity, conducted at the outset of the program, identified a need for babysitters as a priority for residents, and as a result VISTA workers assigned to Jobs-Plus were trained as trainers of Mt. Airy young people to fill this role.

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[13]The author gratefully thanks all the Mt. Airy Jobs-Plus participants who made this chapter possible. Residents, staff, and collaborative members generously shared their time and experience. She especially wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Sally Brown, Nona Ferguson, Barbara Freeman, Shannon Friberg, Joanne MacDonald, Susan Montgomery, Olga Rocha, Hanaan Salahuddin, Monica Shelby, Bob Vang, and Stacey Vang.

St. Paul was the first site in the Jobs-Plus demonstration to implement rent incentives; families began receiving benefits in November 1998. The rent incentives plan offers working families the options either of having their rent fixed at the Jobs-Plus flat rent level or of having it calculated using the traditional HUD formula. This plan is similar to the approach required by the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act, although the Jobs-Plus flat rents are lower than the QHWRA flat rents recently approved by the PHA Board of Commissioners. By making the incentives conditional on all family members over age 18 attending the program orientation and signing a Jobs-Plus membership agreement, the plan stresses the responsibility of an entire family to commit to employment goals.

The Housing Development and Its Population

Mt. Airy Homes, a community of 298 households, sits on top of a high hill overlooking the city of St. Paul. Surrounding the hill's summit on all sides are Mt. Airy's houses ¾ attractive townhomes with front porches and small front yards. Many of the houses are arranged in semi-square groupings so that they surround a courtyard with a playground in the center. Small parking lots are scattered among the groupings, each one serving several clusters of homes.

At first sight, this community near the heart of the city resembles a suburban development. Houses with beige vinyl siding and white trim are set off by spindled porch railings and interconnecting walkways and are situated on hills reminiscent of San Francisco. But a closer look reveals a community that differs from a more homogeneous suburban population. The housing development contains people from cultures on several continents — Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America — some newly arrived and others with ancestry going back several generations. There are people whose histories include recent flight from wars and persecution overseas, as well as those who live with the long memory of slavery in the United States.

Mt. Airy is *near* the heart of the city, yet apart from it. A major interstate freeway cuts it off from downtown, and several long hills separate it from the nearby state capitol complex, a gleaming white beacon in the distance, south of the hill's summit. Coming down from the hills, the Capitol is a stone's throw away from Mt. Airy, and the generally accepted landmarks that give the city its pulse can easily be reached by a long walk or a short ride from the development. Still, Mt. Airy is behind, up, and away from landmarks, and it is generally viewed as linked less to downtown than to its adjacent neighborhoods, Frogtown and Midway, toward the east side of St. Paul. These are struggling, working-class, multiracial neighborhoods that are trying to build on the vibrancy of their cultural mix to bring employment, business development, decent housing, and social amenities to their residents.

Mt. Airy families — Hmong, Vietnamese, African-American, Somali, Cambodian, Latino, European American, Laotian, Ethiopian, Native American — reflect not only diverse cultures but the many and varied forms of families in today's society: Some households contain extended families, some are headed by a single parent, and others are two-parent homes. But despite this variety, Mt. Airy families share one characteristic — they are all struggling to survive and thrive on meager household incomes. Some people at Mt. Airy feel that good-quality jobs and opportunities have been denied them because of discrimination, lack of connections, immigration and war-related traumas, lack of access to education and training, language barriers,

and hopelessness about economic advancement bred from societal exclusion and poverty. Yet families raise the next generation with high aspirations.

Residents of Mt. Airy embraced the Jobs-Plus program because it offered a roadmap toward achieving those aspirations. Jobs-Plus, launched in 1997, promised a combination of strategies that together might result in a large majority of residents being employed; bringing in decent wages as a greater proportion of household income; and moving in the direction of higher-paying, substantive jobs with longevity, upward mobility, and benefits.

When Jobs-Plus began, the ethnic backgrounds of heads of households were 7 percent white, 19 percent African-American, 74 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and less than 1 percent Native American. Two percent were Latino of any race. Of the 297 households, 16 percent had some income from wages, and 87 percent received public assistance through AFDC. Among the ethnic mix of residents, Asians, including Hmong refugees, strongly predominate; Hmong is the major second language spoken at Mt. Airy.

Mt. Airy residents signed up for Jobs-Plus in the hope they could benefit from the promises of the program: rent incentives, widespread assistance with job-seeking and placement, training and educational opportunities. In addition, program leaders looked to Jobs-Plus for help in building supportive ties with neighbors and community businesses and in the promotion of changes in the way government and human service agencies do business so that they are more helpful to low-income people seeking a better life.

Program Infrastructure

Staffing and Management

St. Paul's Jobs-Plus program differs from the other Jobs-Plus sites because until June 2000 it had been operating without an office specifically designated as its hub and without an executive-level staff member to lead it. Instead of one director, the program was governed by the collaborative under what its members called "a shared leadership model," in which program staff reported to whatever collaborative member organization funded their positions and/or was in charge of their functions. In July 1999, the collaborative decided to hire a Program Manager and devoted significant time to preparing for the addition of the position. The balance of this section describes the management and staffing structure of Jobs-Plus as it operated prior to the hiring of the Program Manager.

Although a long list of organizations — trade unions, businesses, educational institutions, community groups, and government agencies — signed on to the original Jobs-Plus application, five core partners emerged as the program's governing body. These partners, which became known as the Key Collaborators, include the St. Paul Public Housing Agency, Ramsey County Community Human Services (which houses the welfare department), the Wilder Foundation, the St. Paul Public Schools, and the Resident Leadership Team (RLT), which represents Mt. Airy residents. Initially, the City of St. Paul, through its Office of Planning and Economic Development, also played an active role in the collaborative, but as will be discussed, it eventually became less involved.

When Jobs-Plus began in 1997, the Key Collaborators allocated implementation responsibilities among themselves according to their areas of expertise. For example, some of the tasks relating to rent incentives fell to the PHA; some employment-related tasks were given to the Office of Planning and Economic Development, the school system, and the Wilder Foundation; and some of the tasks related to outreach and recruitment were given to the RLT. Besides their responsibility for specific tasks, these partners have been called on to make decisions on issues within their areas of expertise.

Although the Key Collaborators have assumed responsibility for various pieces of program implementation, most of the day-to-day implementation tasks fall to staff who are on loan to Jobs-Plus and designated as program employees, but who, as noted, report to different organizations within the collaborative, depending on the nature of their work. The staff includes four Employment Counselors; a Job Developer (whose position has been vacant since November 1999); an Outreach Worker, who until recently spent half time on child care outreach and half on employment-related outreach; and an outstationed county welfare worker. Three VISTA workers and two residents who were hired as child care workers in two on-site child care rooms are also considered part of the staff. Finally, a new position has been created to handle child care issues for Jobs-Plus and other residents. A Community Organizer was briefly on board, but mostly the position has remained vacant. There are, however, plans to fill it again in 2000.

An effort has been made to have the backgrounds of the staff reflect some of the diversity of the residents. Of the four staff members involved in employment counseling, one is Hmong, two are African-American, and one is European-American. Another of the Hmong Counselors, who carried a heavy caseload of primarily Hmong and other Southeast Asian residents, resigned his position as of January 2000, which left a major gap until it was filled by the former Job Developer when she returned from maternity leave. At an October collaborative meeting, the members agreed on the urgent need to hire a fifth Job Counselor, and have set the wheels in motion for the hiring process.

The Wilder Foundation, one of Ramsey County's largest philanthropic and service organizations, plays a particularly active role in employing and supervising Jobs-Plus staff and in other aspects of the program. Founded in 1906, the Foundation works through a number of divisions, which focus on early childhood development, services to the elderly, mental health services, services to immigrants and refugees, and the operation of child care centers and training of child care providers. The Foundation employs three of the Job Counselors and supports the Job Developer's salary when the position is filled. The fourth Job Counselor is employed by the St. Paul public schools and had been working in the community as part of the STEP program (a predecessor program to Jobs-Plus, described later in the report).

The Wilder Foundation also hired a Community Organizer through the demonstration funding, supervises the VISTA workers, and operates the on-site child care rooms in the Mt. Airy Community Center, thereby supervising the two residents who are its child care workers. The Wilder Research Center, the Foundation's research arm, completed an assessment of the program's early operations. Most recently, the PHA's EDD funds are being used by the Foundation to conduct a local evaluation of the program.

A final important role for the Foundation is that its technical assistance department, the Community Services Group, has usually been the employer of the different individuals who have

served as facilitators of the collaborative over the life of the program. According to most collaborative members, these facilitators not only navigate members through the scheduled meetings but have taken on the lion's share of tasks related to continuity and planning between the meetings.

Members of the RLT, who were recruited and voted in by the Resident Council and who are strong and respected leaders within the community, have been instrumental in promoting Jobs-Plus, recruiting residents to enroll, designing and advocating for rent incentives, keeping the community informed and serving as a voice for the community, and conducting an asset mapping survey of Mt. Airy residents — a special exercise to identify employability strengths, weaknesses, and needs of residents. They have also been involved in decisions about hiring for positions that were not already committed to the core partner organizations under an Economic Development and Supportive Services (ED/SS) grant, designed shortly before the Jobs-Plus application was prepared. From October 1999 until March 2000, RLT members received technical assistance to help them strengthen the group's organizational capacity.

As noted, besides the five Key Collaborators, Jobs-Plus has a number of far less active partners. At the outset, the city saw its role as connecting the program to local employers but stopped trying to assume major responsibility in this area because staff within the Department of Planning and Economic Development found it difficult to attend evening meetings and because they saw that the Job Counselors and the Job Developer supported by the Wilder Foundation and the school system were already working on employment connections for the program

Some agency representatives on the collaborative see many of the organizations on the list of partners on the Jobs-Plus application as "supportively waiting in the wings," willing to help when asked. For example, some representatives point out that the St. Paul Mayor's Office was initially very supportive of Jobs-Plus, hosting two key meetings with employers. These collaborative members would like the Department of Planning and Economic Development to once again become more engaged in the program. Along these lines, some RLT members have expressed dissatisfaction with the ongoing absence of certain powerful partners, particularly those from corporations and unions, believing that they might help expedite residents' efforts to connect with substantive jobs.

Facilities

Collaborative meetings and most other Jobs-Plus activities take place in the Mt. Airy Community Center. The heart of community life and used by members of all the ethnic groups that make up the resident population, the Center is a modern, well-kept facility operated and funded by the PHA. Residents — several of them RLT members — who are employed by the PHA, staff the Center's front desk. The facility contains a large community room, two child care rooms, several meeting rooms, and the offices of Jobs-Plus employment staff. It also houses social service providers, including providers of Head Start and Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) services. In addition, PHA has revamped two rooms for Jobs-Plus to use as a career resource room and as a computer lab. The lab houses 10 computers that permit access to the Internet and that are loaded with the Plato basic skills education program. This includes JobLink, a computerized listing of available jobs.

Program Flow

Recruitment

At the beginning of Jobs-Plus, the RLT and staff from various collaborative member organizations who assisted them — VISTA workers, employment and training staff, PHA staff, and staff from the welfare department and the Wilder Foundation — used a number of modes of communication to recruit residents. Outreach methods included door-to-door flyers, a brochure, articles in a community newsletter, phone calls, meetings, inserts in rent notices, and word-of-mouth contacts. People doing outreach made a special effort to contact community programs housed within the Mt. Airy Community Center. Resident Council leaders provided information on Jobs-Plus at their meetings, in conversations with their neighbors, and at special Jobs-Plus orientation meetings; and residents were invited to orientations in different languages, including Hmong.

One of the collaborative members observed that offering rent incentives — a topic discussed in more detail later — is the best recruiting strategy at the disposal of the program. Other incentives were that leaders of the organizing effort spoke the same languages as the residents and offered food, door prizes, and other tangible benefits at meetings and events. The RLT, VISTA workers, and other collaborative members also heightened the visibility of Jobs-Plus within the Community Center by organizing festive community events and by using buttons, banners, balloons, and T-shirts to generate enthusiasm and create name recognition for the program.

Some of the program experiences testify to the belief that recruitment is greatly facilitated when people connect personally and encourage one another to join in activities or events. For example, a Mt. Airy resident and RLT member heard about Jobs-Plus through her previous involvement in STEP (Support for Training and Employment Program, described below), held at the Community Center, and she also read flyers left at her door. But in a pattern that appears to be common in the program, one of the most important factors in her involvement was her contact with a neighbor. In her words, "My neighbor recruited me because she was able to explain it to me — my neighbor was part of the Key Collaborators. It was the resident, person-to-person contact that was the most effective." This resident also noted that the rent incentives were one of the most significant inducements for her to join the program.

To understand the recruitment experience at Mt. Airy, it is necessary to understand both the role of these rent incentives and the role that STEP, which predated Jobs-Plus, have played in attracting participants. These issues are discussed next.

STEP and Its Role in Recruitment. St. Paul Public Housing Agency and St. Paul Public Schools jointly formed the Support for Training and Employment Program in 1992. STEP, which came to Mt. Airy in 1993, is designed to bring education, training, and employment opportunities to people living in St. Paul public housing. Historically, STEP has been funded by special federal grants and foundation funding raised by the PHA and the Family Resident Councils. STEP serves residents from all four of the city's family developments. PHA contracted with the St. Paul Public Schools to deliver STEP employment and training services to residents; STEP has offices in two of the developments: Mt Airy and McDonough, one of the demonstration comparison sites. At Mt. Airy, the program funds a full-time Coordinator/Employment Counselor and a part-time Bilingual

Assistant. STEP offered residents a series of six workshops as well as special occupational training programs.

In 1997 and 1998, STEP Counselors also worked with residents who enrolled in a HUD-funded employment-focused rent incentives program that was an antecedent to the Jobs-Plus financial incentives. Although enrolled residents were expected to be in contact with one of the two Job Counselors once a month, it was very difficult for the Counselors to sustain contact, since each of them carried a caseload of approximately 200 residents.

When Jobs-Plus began, STEP was not subsumed under the umbrella of Jobs-Plus but continued as a separate entity, with an ongoing reporting relationship with the St. Paul Public Schools. However, with the initiation of Jobs-Plus, one of the two STEP Job Counselors was assigned full-time to Mt. Airy, where she has a dual identification: She is both a Jobs-Plus and a STEP Counselor. She continues to report to the St. Paul Public Schools.

In reflecting on the transition to Jobs-Plus, this Counselor addressed an important question: Was there any value added to Mt. Airy by bringing in Jobs-Plus to stand alongside STEP? She believes that Jobs-Plus did strengthen employment resources at the development. First, the program's collaborative structure provided more opportunities to link residents to key services than had been possible with STEP alone. The Counselor particularly cites the connections that the Wilder Foundation and the City of St. Paul were able to make on behalf of residents. She also thinks that, in comparison to STEP, Jobs-Plus is able to provide more personalized services to residents because the demonstration funding allows for the addition of more Job Counselors and a Job Developer to the Mt. Airy service constellation.

The existence of STEP expedited Jobs-Plus recruitment and enrollment at Mt. Airy. This is because STEP staff were able to enroll STEP participants directly into Jobs-Plus — a procedure that short-circuited the need to introduce many residents to the concept of an employment and training program based at Mt. Airy.

Recruitment and Rent Incentives. Between the inception of the program in late 1997 and October 1998, approximately 50 to 60 residents were recruited into Jobs-Plus. In October, following HUD's September 1998 approval of the program's year 1 rent incentives plan; the incentives became a significant feature of the program's recruitment appeal. The year 1 plan, which had been developed with active participation of the RLT, offered residents a strong inducement to join Jobs-Plus. Under the plan, all enrollees, including the elderly and people with disabilities, received one month of free rent up-front, regardless of whether or not they were working. In households without workers, rents were calculated according to the traditional HUD formula, but people who earned wages at the time of enrollment or who subsequently began to work had their earnings totally disregarded for one year when their rent was calculated. Thus, they could reap the major reward of rent payments that did not count any income from jobs.

With the one-year HUD approval for the plan, PHA intended to operate it through November 30, 1999. However, soon after its inception, HUD withdrew the agreement, saying it had had no authority to approve it. An arrangement was made to continue enrollment, but only through March 31, 1999.[14]

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[14]Once HUD approval had been withdrawn, PHA asked the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners for permission to continue the rent incentives. Although the costs could have added up to over $450,000 for year 1, the

During the period when year 1 incentives were in effect, and especially after a massive outreach campaign when it was understood that new enrollment would last only until the end of March 1999, a large number of households joined Jobs-Plus. In all, 60 percent of Mt. Airy residents signed up for Jobs-Plus over the entire period when incentives were in effect, with 178 families joining during the time of stepped-up efforts to enroll participants before the March 31 deadline.

When Jobs-Plus supporters did outreach for Jobs-Plus, they discussed all components of the program, not just financial incentives. Nevertheless, in the words of a PHA staff member, the incentives "were the hook to draw people in." Jobs-Plus enrollment patterns confirm that observation. For example, while 328 individuals in almost 200 of 298 Mt. Airy households had enrolled in Jobs-Plus by the end of June 1999, very little of that enrollment was attributable to the period after March 1999, when the year 1 incentive program was closed.

While working with HUD to resolve the impasse, a committee of the collaborative, comprising residents and various agency members, submitted a revised rent incentive proposal for years 2 through 5, based on a flat rent model. PHA sought HUD's approval for this proposal, asking for a response by October 15, 1999. PHA was given permission to proceed with implementing the flat rent model of rent incentives as of January 1, 2000 and retroactive to December 1, 1999.

Details of the new rent incentive agreement are discussed in a later section. In connection with recruitment and enrollment, however, it is worth noting that in order to receive the incentives, all adults living in a household, with the exception of students living away from home, are required to attend an orientation and sign a membership agreement that covers all family members. Since the end of December 1999, residents who were receiving rent incentives for year 1 have been attending a steady stream of orientations and reenrolling for year 2. Future orientations and enrollments are planned for residents who are working but have not yet received rent incentives and for those not yet enrolled in Jobs-Plus.

Orientation and Enrollment

When year 1 incentives were in effect, residents were not required to attend an orientation, but most did enroll through this process. Twenty-six orientations were held between October 1998 and March 1999. Orientations sometimes occurred twice a week, once in the daytime and once in the evening. The proceedings were translated into Hmong, Vietnamese, and Cambodian. Interpreters were available for speakers of other languages. Currently, orientations are held monthly for new enrollees.

The orientation included background information on Jobs-Plus, information about training programs that had already taken place under STEP and would continue as Jobs-Plus, and descriptions by resident leaders of their involvement in the start-up of Jobs-Plus and the functioning of the RLT. PHA staff described the rent incentives and helped residents fill out

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mission to continue the rent incentives. Although the costs could have added up to over $450,000 for year 1, the Board made the commitment to continue enrollment in the plan through March 31, 1999. In late July, HUD agreed to cover PHA's rent revenue losses through the end of HUD's fiscal year, September 30, 1999, by allowing the agency to tap Section 8 project reserves. The St. Paul PHA Board of Commissioners would take responsibility for revenue losses in October and November 1999.

forms concerning changes in their rent. When year 1 incentives were in effect, residents also received their vouchers for one month of free rent at the orientation.

To enroll, attendees at the orientation filled out an application, which was developed with the help of Wilder Foundation staff and which seeks key information, including the applicant's income and information on family members, educational level, GED status, primary language, medical history, and other information on personal issues helpful to Counselors.

Once enrolled, residents were assigned to one of the Job Counselors or the Job Developer, all of whom perform case management functions for the program. Language is a major factor in matching participants to staff. Participants are told they must be in contact with their Counselor at least monthly, and ideally staff would like to take the initiative to contact each participant once a month to check on their progress and intervene when necessary. They feel, however, that their caseload size makes it impossible to hold to a monthly schedule. As of December 1999, the total caseload for the four staff members was estimated to be 322. One of the Hmong Counselors, who had a caseload of 180, resigned in January. One Employment Counselor, commenting on the difficulty of serving this number of residents, observed, "It's hard to do a good job — you can't do quality case management, so we try to triage our caseloads. The highest priority is people not working at all." Staff believe that a more realistic goal than monthly monitoring — and one that they are generally but not always able to meet — is to be in contact with all participants at least quarterly.

All the Employment Counselors have expressed concern about staffing levels that they say have made it difficult for them to follow up on residents after assessment or to fully engage with hard-to-reach clients. Since the end of this report period, the program has responded to the concern of the Counselors by adding three Employment Counselor positions (one at the expense of leaving the Job Developer position unfilled until recently).

It should also be noted that some residents attending RLT meetings have disputed the Employment Counselors' claim that they are overextended. These residents observed that the Counselors tended to see a select group of clients repeatedly and were frequently away from their offices at meetings and that some RLT leaders themselves had never received follow-up calls after their assessments.

At enrollment, applicants also sign a membership agreement. This document summarizes both the benefits and responsibilities of participating in Jobs-Plus. The benefits listed include employment services, rent discounts, and possible priority for on-site child care or assistance in finding child care, while responsibilities include complying with requirements in the lease, following the rules of MFIP (Minnesota Family Investment Program — Minnesota's welfare reform program) and respecting the rules guiding Community Center use — as well as specific employment-related responsibilities such as contacting the Jobs-Plus Employment Counselor monthly, meeting with the Counselor quarterly, and attending required training sessions.

Even though staff have not been strict about the need to comply with the membership agreements, as the program developed, Employment Counselors and some RLT members came to believe that the original membership responsibilities were insufficiently clear and specific. At the November 18, 1999, collaborative meeting, members approved a revamped membership agreement, which included additional items. Six required training sessions were spelled out — Budgeting, ABC's of Credit, How to Avoid Consumer Traps, Homeownership, Banking

Information, and Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving. The agreement also specified that participants are required to attend "any additional training sessions determined necessary by the Employment Counselors." At a December 1999 RLT meeting, some resident leaders expressed strong sentiments about the importance of requiring other training workshops for Jobs-Plus participants in addition to those that are offered. These leaders thought that issues such as substance abuse, which have a significant impact on residents' lives and their ability to work, should be a focus of training. The collaborative has not yet acted on this suggestion.

Another condition for receiving incentives that is now in effect is that residents who do not have a high school diploma or a GED must complete an educational assessment; as a result, the program may require attendance in GED or ESL classes. Also, residents who are not employed and who do not have a work exemption will be required to attend weekly Job Club meetings when they resume.

Assessment

Thus far, the program has assessed approximately 250 enrollees. (See Table 7.1 for information on staffing and numbers of participants served for assessment, education, and employment services available through the program.)

To conduct the assessments, the Jobs-Plus Employment Counselors and the first Job Developer used a Jobs-Plus case notes form. Its 30 questions elicit information on a variety of areas, including green card status, GED attainment, housing, physical and emotional problems, interviewing skills, access to training programs and appropriate clothing, child care needs, and work background. The form also contains a mechanism for tracking referrals.

Staff members can spend up to an hour with people on a first visit. They talk with them in depth, usually going beyond the assessment form, uncovering barriers that stand in the way of their entering the labor market.

One Job Counselor, who worked with a large number of Hmong residents, said he looked at clients' strengths instead of focusing on their weaknesses. "If people say they can't do anything, I ask them whether they've done child care, or housework, or needlework. When they say 'yes,' I tell them they can use skills they have to go to work." This Counselor also tried to assess enrollees' language capabilities. "Sometimes they're scared to talk, but they do have some language skills."

One pattern staff have noted is that a number of residents, especially those with lower skill levels, are uninterested in using assessment information. Thus, according to two of the Job Counselors, the program has interest and ability inventories on hand but has seldom used them because people who come in for the purpose of going to work usually have established an idea of what they want to do — in many cases, what someone they know is already doing — for exam-

Table 7.1

Jobs-Plus in St. Paul: Mt. Airy Homes

Resident Participation in Education, Training, and Support Services

Type of Service	Staff Involved	Employing Organization	Service Location	Jobs-Plus Only?	Number of Jobs-Plus Participants
Personal and employability assessment	4 Jobs-Plus Employment Counselors	Wilder Foundation (3); St. Paul Public Schools (1)	Mt. Airy Community Center	yes	N/A
Computer-assisted and newspaper job searches	4 Jobs-Plus Employment Counselors; 3 VISTA workers	Wilder Foundation (3); St. Paul Public Schools (1); VISTA supervised by Wilder	Mt. Airy Community Center	no	N/A
Résumé preparation and job application assistance	4 Jobs-Plus Employment Counselors; 3 VISTA workers	Wilder Foundation (3); St. Paul Public Schools (1); VISTA (3)	Mt. Airy Community Center	no	N/A
Customized short-term training courses in electronic assembly, keyboarding, forklift operation, and nursing assistant duties	Instructors	St. Paul Technical Institute; St. Mary's Nursing Home; St. Paul Public Schools	St. Paul Technical Institute; St. Mary's Nursing Home; Mt. Airy Community Center	yes (except the computer lab, which is open to all Mt. Airy residents)	1997: Electronic assembly: 34; nursing assistant: 11 1998: 0 1999: 0
Job Club (suspended in November 1999 due to low attendance and staff maternity leave)	Jobs-Plus Job Developer	Wilder Foundation	Mt. Airy Community Center	yes	N/A
Job retention support	4 Jobs-Plus Employment Counselors	Wilder Foundation (3); St. Paul Public Schools (1)	Mt. Airy Community Center	yes	N/A
Adult Basic Education and GED preparation	Licensed teacher	St. Paul Public Schools	Mt. Airy Community Center, in the computer lab	no	Attended classes: 15 Received GED: 1

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Type of Service	Staff Involved	Employing Organization	Service Location	Jobs-Plus Only?	Number of Jobs-Plus Participants
English as a Second Language (ESL) class	ESL instructor	Lao Family Association	Mt. Airy Community Center	no	Total: 40 Mt. Airy: 28 Completed course: 2
Scholarship fund: contains total of $6,500; residents can apply for up to $650 for course fees, books, tools, equipment, etc.	2 Jobs-Plus Employment Counselors, with input from Advisory Committee that includes RLT members	Wilder Foundation (1); St. Paul Public Schools (1)	Mt. Airy Community Center	no	4 (1 resident utilized the fund twice)
Skills First program: an intensive 3-6 weeks of job preparation and training	Staff of the St. Paul Technical Institute	Skills First is a collaboration of 4 sponsoring organizations: St. Paul Port Authority, St. Paul Public Schools, St. Paul Rehabilitation Center, and St. Paul Technical Institute	St. Paul Technical Institute	no	1
Job fairs: employers are invited to distribute information and recruit employees	On-site: Jobs-Plus Job Developer is lead staff; Off-site: organized by various sponsoring organizations	Wilder Foundation, if sponsored by Jobs-Plus; otherwise, various organizations	Mt. Airy Community Center and off-site	no	N/A
Job development: creating new and ongoing linkages with employers, for purpose of hiring Mt. Airy residents	Jobs-Plus Job Developer	Wilder Foundation	on-site	yes	N/A
Job creation: establishing in-home daycare businesses at Mt. Airy	Jobs-Plus staff	Wilder Foundation	on-site	yes	5 residents became providers
Transportation: bus cards, bus tokens, gas gift certificates, cart and van rides	4 Jobs-Plus Employment Counselors, VISTA workers	Wilder Foundation (3); St. Paul Public Schools (1); VISTA	Distributed at Mt. Airy Community Center	yes	N/A

(continued)

Table 7.1 (continued)

Type of Service	Staff Involved	Employing Organization	Service Location	Jobs-Plus Only?	Number of Jobs-Plus Participants
Child care: two on-site child care rooms for young and school-age children, drop-in child care, and on-site home daycare	Wilder staff, Jobs-Plus child care workers, and Mt. Airy resident home-providers	Wilder Foundation; Resident home-based businesses	Mt. Airy Community Center and residents' homes	no	N/A
Head Start	Child Care Workers	Ramsey County Action Programs	Mt. Airy Community Center	no	N/A
After-school tutoring	Sheriff's Tutoring Program	Ramsey County Sheriff's Department	Mt. Airy Community Center	no	N/A
Voicemail service: residents without a phone can use voice mail boxes to leave and receive messages from potential employers	2 Jobs-Plus Employment Counselors	Wilder Foundation (1); St. Paul Public Schools (1) working with Twin Cities Voicemail (a nonprofit organization)	Residents can gain access via any telephone	yes	2 residents used the service; 6 slots were provided
Vouchers and referrals for clothing appropriate for work	Jobs-Plus Employment Counselors, an Outreach Worker, and an MFIP Employment Counselor	Wilder Foundation, St. Paul Public Schools, Ramsey County Community Human Services, consignment shops, and churches	Consignment shops and churches	no	N/A
Food shelf: provides groceries to families after approval by a social worker	Staff and volunteers	Neighbor to Neighbor Program	Mt. Airy Community Center	no	N/A
Hmong Women's Support Group: provides connection and support to Hmong women who are depressed and isolated	Facilitated by a Wilder staff member who is connected to the Southeast Asian Adjustment program	Wilder Foundation	Mt. Airy Community Center and off-site	no	N/A

SOURCE: Interviews with Jobs-Plus staff and service providers.

ple, assembly work. One Counselor said that for some residents a more important criterion for a prospective job than what they learn in an assessment is whether the position requires an interview. "If you can get them a job without going to an interview, they want that. They want to skip the part of filling out an application and going to an interview." In some cases, he had to explain to these residents — who may have difficulty speaking English or are simply intimidated about their ability to handle an interview — that they can't be hired without submitting an application and an interview. Some residents have expressed preferences for jobs in which the supervisor speaks their language.

One Job Counselor reported that he used interest and skills inventories but only for people who already have some education. He observed that there are people at Mt. Airy with high school diplomas and bachelor's degrees, but some are uncertain about what direction or career path to take. He administered career inventories to approximately five high school graduates. He found no other tools that can easily be used on-site to test either the less educated and skilled or the non-English-speaking applicants. This dearth of adequate assessment tools has led him to take some residents to temporary agencies such as Manpower, Inc., that test people for hand coordination, memory, and similar aptitudes.[15]

The Job Counselors acknowledge that some Jobs-Plus enrollees have not been assessed. In summer 1999, to facilitate contact with these individuals, two Job Counselors began seeking them out through home visits.

Job Readiness Services

According to staff, the program's efforts to help individuals become job-ready encompass structured activities as well as more informal supports. Both are discussed in this section.

The Job Developer ran the Job Club, which was intended to follow assessment for many participants, for a brief period. Notwithstanding its name, this "club" can entail individual as well as group activity, but in either form it is intended to help residents address various work preparation issues such as appropriate dress, self-presentation, completing an application, and interviewing. Although suspended in early October due to low attendance, it was scheduled to meet twice each week for two hours — one session during the daytime and one during the evening. Since the Job Developer position was vacant for an extended period, the future of the Job Club was unclear. It may resume operation when a Job Developer is hired.

In addition to programs within the development, Job Counselors can attempt to get residents enrolled in the Skills First program, an intensive six-week job readiness program at St. Paul Technical Institute. Thus far, only one participant has been referred to this program, which combines soft-skills training, basic skills, job skills training (mainly computer skills), and site visits to employers with the option of a short-term technical training track after graduation.

Jobs-Plus also works more informally with participants to motivate them to seek work and/or help them overcome obstacles that keep them from a job search. In this connection, it

[15]Two of the Job Counselors expressed a need to do deeper assessments of residents' work readiness. They referred to the Minnesota Department of Vocational Rehabilitation's ability to do psychological evaluations and noted that the MFIP/welfare-to-work program enables participants to undergo an assessment by a psychologist. These Counselors believe that if they had access to psychological evaluations, they would be better able to understand the limitations that residents might have in participating in training programs.

should be noted that not all the 250 enrollees who have been assessed have availed themselves of program services and that while some may have moved directly into employment or were already working, others have been reluctant, for different reasons, to actively seek work. One of the Job Counselors contacted everyone on his caseload at least once a month; he asked the non-working people about their situation and how he could help them if they were looking for a job. He encouraged them to come into the Career Resource Room, so staff could help them. If people said they couldn't work because they were sick or depressed or stressed, he would refer them to the Southeast Asian Adjustment Program, run by the Wilder Foundation. If they needed a social worker, he would refer them to social workers from the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program who come to Mt. Airy.

A Job Counselor commented that many residents understand the common-sense fact that they have to work and must start somewhere. But, he pointed out, others living in public housing are hard to serve, and some are incapable mentally or physically of working. "Many are sick — physically or mentally — I have to educate them to overcome low self-esteem. This is the hardest psychological warfare I've done. . . . I have to convince people that 'yes, you can do it.' "

This same Job Counselor suggested that residents who are not ready to work participate in ESL classes — discussed in the next section — or a citizenship class, sponsored the by Lao Family Association, which meets at Mt. Airy. During the summer, he also encouraged some residents who were reluctant even to go outside to garden, an activity that he said can occupy their minds and help them see that they have skills.

Illustrating another job readiness challenge for the program, a number of people are on SSI; 8 to 10 out of the 26 households in one of the Job Counselor's caseload are dealing with disability issues. Many residents on SSI are in the 50- or 60-year-old age range and present more difficulties than younger people when they attempt to develop employment plans. However, when the Job Developer worked with these residents, she did not limit herself to employment issues but also tried to help them with other family concerns and personal needs.

A Job Counselor noted that pursuing a GED — an activity discussed in the next section — is another job readiness activity that can be carried out in conjunction with searching for a job. Also, Job Counselors believe that solving child care, clothing, and transportation problems connected with going to work is part of becoming job-ready.

Education and Training

Direct provision of education and training at the Mt. Airy Community Center is geared mainly to teaching remedial and basic skills — reading and math, individualized for each student. GED classes held at the Center are sponsored by the St. Paul Public Schools and taught by St. Paul public school teachers, with their services provided as an in-kind donation from the school system. Instruction centers on the computer lab's Plato program, which has capacities for teaching basic skills and keyboarding and for helping students prepare for GED tests. The program also offers instruction for learners with a primary language other than English and prepares students for the SAT and ACT. Since February 1999, when GED instruction began with the opening of the computer lab, 15 students have been enrolled, and one has graduated. In addition to structured classes, residents are free to use the Plato programs on a drop-in basis.

The Lao Family Association, an organization run primarily by and for Lao and Hmong immigrants, is in charge of the Center's ESL class, which is taught mostly in Hmong. Currently, 28 of 40 students are from Mt. Airy. In the past six years, only two students have graduated from this class. In connection with ESL instruction, it should also be noted that four Jobs-Plus participants received English language instruction as part of their jobs at Quebecor Printing, a firm that, as a result of encouragement from Jobs-Plus, offered this service to employees. Unfortunately, Quebecor announced that it is closing its St. Paul plant.

At some points, Jobs-Plus has been able to offer driver's training to participants. One Job Counselor taught students driving rules, took them to the exam station for their written tests, and brought them to driving lessons. Although the instruction is still needed, the program no longer has funds to offer it.

Besides taking advantage of these on-site educational services, Mt. Airy residents who are interested in pursuing vocational or other post-secondary education can get help from the Employment Counselors to apply for off-site training and for financial aid to support their schooling. A scholarship fund, established for Jobs-Plus participants that can be tapped for up to $650 per person, can be used for books, tools, and other educationally oriented items.

It is important to note that because MFIP financial workers tend to approve only short-term training plans for welfare recipients, Jobs-Plus generally can refer residents to training that lasts no more than six months. In the words of one Job Counselor, "Even if I say that someone is good enough to go to St. Paul Technical College, their fate is in the financial worker's hands." Another Job Counselor gave her perception of the philosophy underlying Jobs-Plus: "It's a jobs program — people need to go to work." Noting that Jobs-Plus is trying to align with MFIP's mandates for job placement and only brief training, she said that she thinks the staff will support people taking short-term training — four to ten weeks — if it seems there is a good chance it will lead to a job.

Over the course of the program period, Jobs-Plus staff have organized training in keyboarding, electronic assembly, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) duties, and forklift operation. All classes were held at St. Paul Technical College, except CNA, which was held at St. Mary's Nursing Home. Two electronic assembly classes held in 1997 attracted a total of 34 residents, and two 1997 CNA classes were attended by six and five residents, respectively. According to two of the Employment Counselors, most people who graduated from the first round of training, including everyone who completed CNA training, found jobs. Many participants in electronics training were not selected or kept on by employers because employer feedback indicated that the training is too short for workers who are inexperienced, such as those at Mt. Airy.

Since participation rates in employment and training activities have been quite low, the program was considering plans to expand its training options, including a partnership with Goodwill Industries to deliver a training program in banking. Job Counselors discussed the possibility of a second round of asset mapping to determine the kinds of interests and training residents would like to pursue.

Job Search

One important resource used in helping residents with job searches is the Career Resource Room. It houses two computers, one of which contains JobLink, an Internet job service. Employers send in lists of jobs to this service, and residents can search it for jobs under categories that include areas of interest, location, and number of hours offered.

The Career Resource Room also contains other computer job links, telephones for contacting employers, tip sheets on job search and interviewing, and books on résumé writing. Job announcements from a variety of employers are posted in the Community Center, although these listings are often months out of date. Many of these contacts were established prior to Jobs-Plus and have been ongoing. PHA and other Jobs-Plus partners in the collaborative have been copying job announcements from their organizations and sending them to the Community Center for posting.

The staff members who assist residents with a job search include the four Job Counselors and the program's three VISTA workers. Staff help residents use JobLink, other Internet resources, and newspaper want ads; and they work with them on writing cover letters and résumés. As discussed in connection with assessment, staff are often guided by the preferences for certain positions and types of employment that the job-seekers bring into the Center. However, they also take into account the kinds of openings that are available.

When it is feasible, staff encourage residents to follow through independently on contacting employers. One of the Job Counselors highlighted job openings from the newspaper — for example, assembly or light industrial jobs — and showed them to residents. If their English was good enough, residents were encouraged to call employers on their own. Otherwise, the Job Counselor called. If residents were able to get to a company themselves, to fill out an application or go to an interview, they did so. But if they were unable to obtain transportation, the Counselor used his own car or a van, if available. Jobs-Plus participants have also taken advantage of transportation the program offers them to attend off-site job fairs — for example, the ones sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

On-site job fairs are held approximately once a year. At the October 1999 fair held at the Mt. Airy Community Center, approximately half a dozen employers — including Ryder school bus service, UPS, Regions Hospital, and Sew What — were represented. All said that they were hiring immediately; most of them paid fairly decent wages and benefits; some offered training (UPS and Ryder); some offered union jobs (UPS and Regions); and some were willing to transport residents to and from work (Ryder).

Just a handful of Mt. Airy residents attended the fair. The Job Developer believed that it would have been preferable to have the flyers state that attendance was mandatory for Jobs-Plus participants. She thought this kind of reinforcement is necessary to get a good turnout. One of the Job Counselors felt that the fair would have been more helpful if employers offering assembly or other light industrial jobs had been represented, because he believes that these positions are some of the best workforce entry points for many Mt. Airy residents with no skills or training.

Not all participants use Jobs-Plus to find work. While one Employment Counselor estimated that he had placed between 20 and 40 people in jobs, he and the Job Developer noted that some residents are finding jobs on their own — for example, in machine and metal-working

shops and in assembly departments. Sometimes people find positions because they have connections through their relatives or friends.

A Case History

The accompanying box illustrates how the various Jobs-Plus services are delivered — and are sometimes duplicated by other service providers in the community. The name of this Mt. Airy resident and some other identifying details have been changed to protect her privacy.

A Resident's Story

The experience of a Mt. Airy resident whom we will call Ms. Williams illustrates the fragile hold that many residents have on economic well-being. Williams had been working full time at a convenience store when she enrolled in Jobs-Plus. Soon thereafter, she lost her job and signed up for MFIP. She also began paying rent, since the rent incentive program that had been covering her ended almost simultaneously with the loss of her job. As an MFIP client, she was assigned an MFIP Employment Counselor; her contact with the Jobs-Plus Employment Counselors dropped off as her contact with her MFIP Counselor increased. Fortunately, her MFIP Counselor was empathetic and suggested she seek treatment for a debilitating condition before getting a full-time job again.

After treatment, Williams reported: "I was ready to get a job. I wanted a job that I loved." She spoke with one of the Jobs-Plus Employment Counselors, who "told me I needed skills"; so preferring to study on-site to traveling to the Hubb Learning Center, she enrolled in GED classes at Mt. Airy. She began talking more with the Jobs-Plus employment staff, and also graduated from the GED program. She spoke enthusiastically about the wonderful support she received from her instructor.

While two of the Job Counselors speculated that low levels of participation in some Jobs-Plus program elements might be attributed to lack of trust, cultural issues, shame, fear, self-doubt, self-sabotage, and the challenge of trying something new, Ms. Williams took advantage of what was offered despite what she saw as weaknesses in the program. Once she attained her GED, she was obligated as an MFIP recipient to attend an off-site employment program operated by the Wilder Foundation under contract to Ramsey County. Working both through the Wilder jobs program and the Career Resource Room at Mt. Airy, she began to look for jobs. One avenue of work she pursued was in health services, using the JobLink computer service at both programs. But she did not find a job.

(continued)

After a review of Williams's job history and skills, and help to develop her résumé, the Wilder Counselor encouraged her to look for office jobs, where she could strengthen her skills, rather than the kind of convenience-store position she had already tried.

Williams reports she received several different and important kinds of help for her job search. She heard about job leads both from friends and from JobLink; the Wilder program's staff enhanced the helpfulness of JobLink because they organized JobLink's listings into categories. She was also able to use the phone at Mt. Airy's Career Resource Room and at the Wilder program. Still, she found it costly to travel to employers to fill out and deliver applications.

Ultimately Williams did find a job as a data processor at a health care company. Her entrée to this position was her previous experience volunteering for community programs. Under a special welfare-to-work program, for-profit and nonprofit agencies that have agreed to become welfare-to-work sites can receive federal dollars for a 12-week period to pay people who are making a transition off welfare. The hope is that these individuals will gain experience and skills, although they are working for very low pay. Another hope is that after receiving the 12 weeks of subsidized labor, employers will hire the workers permanently. Williams began working 25 hours a week at the health care company at the rate of $6 an hour, but after the 12 weeks, she was hired at $8 an hour plus benefits.

Once Williams was working, she maintained frequent contact with the Job Counselors, finding that they were open to hearing her talk about both her job and some of her personal needs. "People were morally supportive of my life — they were really concerned. I love these women, especially [one of the Employment Counselors], who was there for it all. [One of the PHA Site Managers] also played a part in helping me improve my life, because she listened and gave suggestions rather than threats."

Parts of the experience that this resident had in Jobs-Plus seem to illustrate an observation about social service programs made by urban policy professor John McKnight: Clients often seem "lost in a forest of services." In the case of Jobs-Plus, some of its services overlap with those of the MFIP employment services staff. Every Mt. Airy resident on public assistance is assigned to an MFIP Employment Counselor and to a Ramsey County financial worker; she is also likely to be involved with a Ramsey County child care services worker. If the resident signs up for Jobs-Plus, she is assigned to a Jobs-Plus Employment Counselor and may also work with a staff member covering child care issues under Jobs-Plus.

In an effort to avoid duplication, the various workers communicate regularly and coordinate their work. For example, placing the county financial worker on-site at Mt. Airy makes it easier for residents to deal with multiple program requirements and paperwork all in one place, without having to leave their neighborhood. It also facilitates communication among the workers of the various programs. However, an overly complex structure of service provision remains a problem for this program.

A collaborative member noted that in order to cut down on the number of different Counselors who served the same client, the Ramsey County welfare department would have had to certify the Mt. Airy Career Resource Room as a site qualified to serve MFIP recipients. This may have involved making some physical renovations to the space as well as decisions such as the need to serve people who do not live in the development, as well as Mt. Airy residents. Such decisions would have required joint accommodations to be made by the housing authority, the Wilder Foundation, and the welfare department. Although all three institutions sit on the Jobs Plus collaborative, no joint action has been taken.

Job Development

The Job Developer took the lead in contacting employers by phone, visiting them, and touring their facilities. One of her methods for identifying prospective employers was to examine the residents' strengths and weaknesses as well as their employment preferences. She and other employment services staff were also alert to where residents were already working. One of the Job Counselors reported that he asked employed residents if their companies were hiring, and when he heard that they were, he followed up by calling to ask if he could send more applicants to them.

Because many residents do not want to travel, staff have also sought out prospective employers by driving around the neighborhoods surrounding Mt. Airy and noting which employers are located in the vicinity. Another strategy that the Job Developer used to find jobs by location was to refer to a book that lists all Minnesota companies and to select the ones located in the Mt. Airy zip code. Within that list she focused particularly on companies that are described as employing production, assembly, or machine shop workers — positions of particular interest to many Mt. Airy job-seekers. She then made appointments to tour the various companies, explain Jobs-Plus to the employers, and talk to them about what Mt. Airy residents can offer them.

The Job Developer was especially interested in the kind of training companies offer. For example, she discovered that a bakery in the vicinity provides its own training in ESL and in

some other skills. She approached the bakery as a potential employer. So far, the bakery has not hired a Mt. Airy resident, but the employer was invited to a Mt. Airy job fair, and hopefully a relationship will develop with this employer over time. If a company does not offer ESL training, sometimes the Job Developer offered to provide it herself, if the company would agree to hire some Mt. Airy workers. As noted earlier, four Mt. Airy residents have taken advantage of an ESL program offered by Quebecor Printing in partnership with a specialist in workforce development from the St. Paul public schools.

The Job Developer and one of the Employment Counselors participated in Job Connect, a network of Job Developers who trade job leads. Employers attend their meetings to discuss their requirements and report on openings. Job Connect has established a contact person for each employer, through whom residents can be referred for job openings. The Job Developer also attended monthly luncheons of the Midway Chamber of Commerce Workforce Development Committee and found out about jobs in the Midway area, which is adjacent to Mt. Airy. An Employment Counselor is the Jobs-Plus liaison to the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce and serves on its Workforce Development Committee. Because the Job Developer established a relationship with her counterparts at the Wilder Foundation, these staff members are another source of job leads for Jobs-Plus participants.

A Job Counselor gave an example of what can come of the kind of proactive searching she and her colleagues undertake. She decided to attend a groundbreaking ceremony at the nearby Port Authority, where she met a representative of a commercial laundry. The company planned to relocate from the suburbs to the Port Authority and within walking distance of Mt. Airy in the spring of 2000. The Job Developer worked on building a good relationship with the company and has placed six or seven residents at the firm.

Despite such successes and the active outreach, overall progress has been slow. The Job Developer acknowledged that the program has had relatively few hires to its credit. She said sometimes residents fail to follow through on completing applications; in other instances they go to interviews but are not hired. She observed that "sometimes employers show a negative attitude toward public housing residents. They're concerned about low education, low skills, and no transportation. I try to counter the myths and tell them some residents have a four-year or two-year degree or have worked in entry-level jobs."

There have also been some concerns about the quality of the jobs that have been developed. Some RLT members have expressed the opinion that the positions found are too menial ¾ for example, housekeeping jobs. But the Job Counselors maintain that the perspective of these community leaders does not reflect the outlook of most residents because, compared with most residents, they are more advanced in their goals, skill levels, and levels of job attainment.

Job Creation

The main job creation strategy used in the program so far — and the only work on promoting business start-ups — has been helping in-home daycare providers get established at Mt. Airy. Thus far, staff have assisted five residents to apply for grants and to get access to other resources, such as money available for fire extinguishers and federal food funding, to get them started. The Wilder Foundation has helped these women meet quarterly for support and networking, by providing food and other logistical support for their meetings. The Jobs-Plus staff

helped build the clientele of one provider by sending her residents who had completed CNA training and who needed child care once they found jobs. A scholarship fund, operated with ED/SS support, pays for continuing education for child care providers. This help is valuable because continuing education is required for child care providers to maintain their license in Minnesota.

The Job Counselors acknowledged that placing residents in publicly subsidized positions has so far not been a high priority in the program. (The welfare-to-work placement for Ms. Williams, discussed earlier, is an exception.) However, within Jobs-Plus itself, a few jobs have been created and have gone to residents. They have filled two positions in the newly established computer lab, and as noted, two residents are working in the child care room. As also noted, the Community Organizer position has mostly been vacant, although the collaborative plans to fill it in 2000.

Job Retention and Advancement

Staff report that overall they have not focused much on issues of retention and advancement because their large caseloads require them to concentrate on helping residents find work initially. The emphasis on retention should increase, however, with the spring 2000 addition of a Counselor who will focus on this area.

One of the Employment Counselors said that he mainly worked on these issues during his monthly calls to monitor his caseload, when he asked employed residents whether they were having any difficulties on the job. Through these calls, he was able to discover and help solve several problems. For example, one resident, who does not speak English and therefore had not understood that she was entitled to take a lunch break, was angry because she felt she was compelled to work straight through the shift. The Job Counselor was able to clarify the situation by explaining the resident's rights to her and also by explaining to the employer that the worker's lack of English had caused the misunderstanding.

The same Job Counselor said that in his monthly calls he checked whether working participants received raises. "If they're at the highest level in the range, they can move to apply for the next level." The experiences of Ms. Williams, presented earlier, illustrate the kind of support that residents could receive from Employment Counselors. In general, however, staff have been unable to establish that kind of morale-building relationship with large numbers of working participants.

Another effort that staff do make in connection with retention is to raise issues related to maintaining employment with residents who are already working when they enroll in Jobs Plus. Two of the Job Counselors report that, during assessments with these new enrollees, they specifically inquire whether these residents need any particular help that would allow them to retain their jobs. Some workers have, in fact, asked for more help to enable them to earn four-year degrees.

The program does have at its disposal funds provided by the county via the Wilder Foundation to offer residents some modest incentives to stay employed. For example, when residents get jobs, Counselors send congratulatory notes and small gift certificates, for example, to buy gas at a local station. They send birthday cards to residents as a personal token of

encouragement, a gesture that has been appreciated. They have also provided bus cards to residents when they get jobs.

Other services and activities that can be considered part of a retention strategy include workshops on budgeting and banking, a health and wellness fair that took place in September 1999, and the on-site child care program, especially the facility for 6- to 12-year-olds.

Support Services

The program offers a number of additional services to help residents find and keep jobs, and all staff are involved in aspects of their delivery. These services include transportation, child care, voice mail, food, clothing, and classes and other help on managing finances.

Transportation

Transportation is provided in different ways. As described earlier, residents can get bus tokens to go to and from an interview, a 31-day bus card to commute to a new job until their first paychecks arrive, and gift certificates that they can use at a local gas station. As also noted, Jobs-Plus staff sometimes use personal vehicles to take residents to and from interviews.

For a period of time, the program was able to transport residents to training, interviews, and job fairs in a van that was funded by the Wilder Foundation. However, the funding for this service ran out, causing it to be suspended, at least temporarily. As a partial alternative, another employment program in St. Paul offers van service that follows an established route to specific employers. This program is willing to pick up Mt. Airy residents who work for these employers.

On the whole, the different kinds of transportation assistance available through Jobs-Plus are not widely publicized. Instead, according to two of the Job Counselors, options are explained to residents individually when needs arise. Thus, not all residents are necessarily aware of the transportation services available to them. For example, one resident expressed the opinion that "Jobs-Plus does nothing for people with cars, and many people do have cars at Mt. Airy. I hoped to get gas money and help with car insurance [through Jobs-Plus]." In the same vein, other residents said that the program lacks a uniform policy for transportation help.

Child Care

Mt. Airy residents with preschoolers or school-age children have access to subsidized on-site child care. If they are enrolled in MFIP, the cost of care is nominal. Low-wage workers are charged on a sliding fee scale. While there is a long waiting list for these sliding fee slots for most St. Paul families, parents at Mt. Airy who are eligible for sliding fee subsidies can be placed without delays in the on-site program because its costs are supported by the ED/SS grant, the Wilder Foundation, and a small contract that the Foundation holds with Head Start.

If parents have younger children, including infants, they may be able to turn to a network of family child care providers located in Mt. Airy or nearby. For example, the Mt. Airy residents trained as in-home providers are currently caring for children of Jobs-Plus participants. Family child care providers in St. Paul can receive either MFIP funds or funds from sliding fee

allocations. However, parents who are on a waiting list for sliding fee slots rarely get access to these providers, who are unwilling to wait for delayed payments.

In addition to the child care resources just mentioned, residents involved in Jobs-Plus activities such as a job search or a GED dass can take advantage of part-time or drop-in care at the Mt. Airy facility. In some cases, MFIP funds are used to cover the entire cost of this service; in others, parents have been asked to pay a fee of $5 per day. Although the fee seems low, there are reports that some parents do not feel they are able to pay it, and staff speculate that more families would take advantage of these services if they were entirely free.

Despite the availability of the on-site child care facility, it is underused — currently with about 10 to 12 slots unfilled. Staff report that many children of Jobs-Plus participants are unsupervised after school until their parents return from work or training. Besides the reasons already cited for low use of subsidized care at Mt. Airy — preference for totally free care, as opposed to paying a nominal fee, and the inaccessibility of subsidized family care for parents on waiting lists — one staff member employed by the Wilder Foundation offers additional speculations on why residents do not take advantage of subsidized care. She observes that some residents do not want to accept public subsidies because the help is given on the condition that they agree to child support collections, or because subsidized care involves complex approval processes, or because parents who distrust public systems believe the costs of subsidized care will eventually skyrocket. She adds that some residents, especially Southeast Asians, tend to prefer the informal care of extended family members to center-based care. More generally, ever since new welfare-to-work rules went into effect, there has been a trend toward use of legal, unlicensed providers who are registered with the state, because parents mistakenly believe that such care is cheaper than the services provided by the formal, center-based system. Finally, she notes that some MFIP workers are willing to waive work requirements because parents convince them that they have no convenient child care options — by claiming, for example, that their families are too large to make it possible for them to arrange care.

Jobs-Plus staff, PHA representatives, and staff of the Wilder Foundation have tried a number of different outreach strategies to make families aware of the child care center and encourage them to use it. They enclose information on the center with rent statements, offer open-house events so parents can view the center, and distribute flyers generally and at job fairs. VISTA workers have done door-to-door canvassing of residents who indicated an interest in child care in response to the asset mapping exercise. Thus far, these techniques have not improved results, but staff are now planning a new intensive outreach effort that will target a list of parents with children of certain ages. As part of this effort, a Hmong child care worker will talk with parents about the learning opportunities offered at the on-site center.

Also as part of its stepped-up emphasis on child care, the program recently expanded the hours its Outreach Worker devotes to child care, from half-time to full time, and simultaneously upgraded the position, so that the worker now functions as a "Child Care Services Coordinator." Her duties in this position include doing child care intakes; overseeing child care classrooms and special child care services, such as babysitting for evening meetings; and staffing the Jobs-Plus Child Care Committee as well as conducting child care outreach.

If the program's efforts to expand use of the center do not finally yield results, it may be necessary to terminate on-site services or open them up to families outside Mt. Airy when the

funding that subsidizes part of the Wilder Foundation's contribution to the center expires, in September 2000.

Other Support Services

Twin Cities Voice Mail has donated six slots for Mt. Airy residents without phones, enabling them to have their own voicemail boxes that they can use to leave and receive messages from prospective employers. However, only two of these slots have been used.

Two services that cover the community at large — the Mt. Airy food shelf, which is run by Neighbor to Neighbor, a local nonprofit agency, and several local consignment shops and church-run boutiques that make clothing available for a nominal price or free of charge — are available to help Jobs-Plus participants. Clothing vouchers for MFIP participants are reimbursed by Ramsey County, but some of the shops also make free clothing available to non-MFIP participants.

The University of Minnesota extension service offers a budgeting class to residents to teach them how to manage their finances as their income increases. The teacher has also been willing to provide one-on-one budget counseling, but only one resident has used this service. Another source of help on financial management offered to residents was a workshop at which representatives of a local bank described an array of banking services, including savings and checking accounts, home loans, and financial planning.

Financial Incentives

Some of the details of the rent incentives program that is now in effect have been discussed earlier, in connection with Jobs-Plus recruitment efforts. This section presents additional information on the program.

Based on a model of graduated Jobs-Plus flat rents, and other benefits for working families, the Year 2-5 Rent Incentives Plan minimizes rent losses, provides greater rewards for families who work more, and protects families unable to work. The plan include these features:

1. One month rent-free to all families when they enroll.

2. A working family has the option to accept a Jobs-Plus flat rent, established annually according to the family's unit size, or to request a traditional rent calculation (30 percent of adjusted income). Flat rents are graduated over the course of the four years and reflect a percentage (after utility adjustments) of the PHA ceiling rents, from 45 percent to 90 percent.

3. One rent-free month each year for families who show continuous employment over the year.

4. Deferred rent credit of $25 per month for each month that a household has wage income — to be used for future rents after the program ends or provided to the family as a lump sum if they move from public housing in good standing before the program ends; and

5. A safety net that will allow working families who lose all of their wage income to pay a minimum rent of $25 per month for up to two months out of each calendar year.

The eligibility requirements for the rent incentives program emphasize family involvement. As noted earlier, to receive incentives, all family members who are 18 years of age or older must attend an information and training session, complete individual assessments, sign a membership agreement, and be in compliance with their lease and MFIP agreements. Participants also must be residents in good standing, must be lease-compliant, and must receive clearance from the PHA management office. If any member of the household does not meet the requirements, the family risks cancellation of benefits, including the incentives. However, Employment Counselors work with families to avoid cancellation. A family may continue to receive Jobs-Plus benefits or reenroll for the incentives if the Counselor determines that members are making a reasonable effort toward their goals and agreements.

Community Support for Work

A Community Support for Work Committee was active in the early stages of Jobs-Plus. Committee members, who included representatives of the collaborative, residents, and VISTA workers, developed and conducted an asset mapping survey of almost 200 households. Residents who responded to the survey identified barriers to working, in such areas as language, communication, child care, and transportation — and solutions that they thought the residents themselves might help to bring about. Many respondents expressed a need for more babysitters, and, on the basis of this finding, it was decided to give the VISTA workers babysitting training offered by the Campfire organization. Several young residents have been trained and provide babysitting for meetings of the collaborative and other groups. The Community Support for Work Committee itself did not continue to operate after the asset mapping project, but, as noted earlier, there has been discussion about conducting a second survey.

A collaborative member acknowledged that the community is "at a fairly preliminary stage with [community supports for work] — the early implementation phase has focused on [building] connections among residents, not specifically related to work, but that will build toward support for work." Pointing to one way in which the program may be laying the groundwork for community supports for work, she observed that, "the Jobs-Plus collaborative forces institutional change," and she gave some examples: PHA expanded the hours of operation for the Community Center building, so that child care and evening meetings could take place at hours appropriate for working parents. Jobs-Plus has instituted some evening hours; for example, a staff member conducted one of the Job Club sessions in the evening, and Job Counselors sometimes remain at work until 6 or 7 P.M. to accommodate working residents. Collaborative meetings take place in the evening, and Jobs-Plus retreats are held on weekends, a change from the way some agencies operated in the past. PHA management staff also work some evening hours to accommodate working families. Ramsey County has placed two financial workers on-site. Also, the Wilder Foundation helps Mt. Airy in-home providers to meet quarterly for support and networking. Overall, shifts in agencies' policies and practices that resulted in locating services on-site or modifying practices to make them more accessible and user-friendly have been seen as institutional changes supporting work.

Conclusions

After a difficult period in mid-1999, the collaborative began moving forward. Several factors seemed to be responsible for this momentum, all of them occurring around the end of October 1999. At this time, a consultant was hired to provide technical assistance for the RLT, and his work was well received, but it remains to be seen to what extent his recommendations will be adopted. In addition, although the hiring process — which began in earnest in October — was lengthy and painstaking, many believe that the hiring of a Program Manager will have a positive impact on the work of the collaborative and the results achieved by Jobs-Plus. Finally, HUD's approval of the rent incentives package is enabling the program to proceed with signing up new residents, while maintaining the progress made by current beneficiaries of rent incentives. The hope is that a resurgence of energy will mark collaborative work, that it will be sustained, and that it will help to nurture positive change in Jobs-Plus and, ultimately, in the Mt. Airy community.

Chapter 8

Jobs-Plus in Seattle

Edward B. Lieblow and Carolina Katz[16]

Program Highlights

Current Status

In 1999, the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) was awarded a $35 million grant under HUD's HOPE VI program to tear down and rebuild the Rainier Vista Garden Community, the location of Seattle's Jobs-Plus program. The process of redevelopment will occur in stages over the next several years and will require temporary relocation of residents. Jobs-Plus will continue to operate, in modified form, during this period as part of the "community and supportive services" component of HOPE VI. However, the impending disruptions to the community and to Jobs-Plus, along with the special circumstances of operating the program in the context of HOPE VI, make it problematic to continue Seattle in the national Jobs-Plus demonstration.[17] The chapter that follows reports on the operation of Jobs-Plus in Seattle through the end of 1999, prior to its adaptation for HOPE VI.

The Program in Operation

As of November 1999, nearly 160 Rainier Vista residents had enrolled in Jobs-Plus, and about 100 job placements (78 residents, some placed more than once) had been made. Most placements have been full time with benefits (either at placement or after a three- to six-month probationary period). The average wage at placement was $8.60/hour, and wages ranged from $6.00/hour to $15.00/hour. In addition, six residents started their own businesses.

Rainier Vista's households form a diverse community with a range of work-related skills and job placement challenges. The program's outreach, recruitment, training, and placement services are all designed to be sensitive to Rainier Vista's cultural diversity. Even with Seattle's currently robust economy, flexibility and resourcefulness are needed to design useful employment and training services for these residents. For this reason, service providers balance formal procedures with informal, individually tailored interventions.

Effective September 1999, the Seattle Housing authority took advantage of its "Moving to Work" status to make rent incentives available to Rainier Vista households enrolled in Jobs-Plus. The Rainier Vista rent incentives plan is built around flat rents that increase every two years until they reach local market rates. The plan also features an interest-bearing escrow

[16]The research team from the Environmental Health and Social Policy Center gratefully acknowledges the time and insights generously volunteered by residents, service providers, and local Jobs-Plus staff. Tyesha Kobel, Kian Grant, and Darlene Conley have provided research assistance. Bert Cooper and Seanna Melchior supplied helpful comments on earlier drafts.

[17]The decision to drop Seattle from the national demonstration was made jointly by HUD, The Rockefeller Foundation, and MDRC. Recognizing that much can still be learned from Seattle's experience in the coming years, SHA, HUD, and MDRC are planning to sponsor a separate evaluation of Rainier Vista's combined Jobs-Plus and HOPE VI intervention.

account that helps residents accumulate up to $10,000 over eight years. Residents can take accumulated savings with them if they move out of Rainier Vista. The plan also includes several protections to keep residents from paying unaffordable rents. For example, they can appeal to a Jobs-Plus Rent Review Committee to request a temporary rent reduction up to $25 per month for three months. Since the rent incentives have been available to residents, Jobs-Plus has witnessed a surge in demand for services.

Progress also has been made in developing community support for work. The development's authorized Resident Advisory Council — known as the Leadership Team — has an organizational structure with the potential to sustain services initiated by Jobs-Plus well beyond the demonstration program. The Community Shares service exchange system has been instituted, and more than 40 participants enrolled as of December 1999.

The Housing Development and Its Population

Rainier Vista has about 1,200 residents living in 481 one-story duplex units. The Vista is located on 60 acres in Seattle's Rainier Valley, about five miles southeast of the city center. Its tree-shaded, landscaped common areas are a hallmark of the Seattle Housing authority's family-oriented public housing developments. The development is split in half by Martin Luther King Way, a major north-south thoroughfare and a key public transit route.

Rainier Vista's apartments were originally built during World War II to help house the booming Boeing aircraft workforce. The Seattle Housing Authority took over the property in 1942. The housing authority completed significant renovations in 1994, and it installed new water and sewer lines in 1997.

Within a mile of Rainier Vista is a mix of single-family homes, ranging from million-dollar waterfront properties to relatively modest houses, along with some medium-density two- and three-story apartment units. To the east, the Columbia City neighborhood is a recent target for gentrification. To the west, a steeply sloped wooded area and a large public park buffer the development. At the top of the slope is a thriving neighborhood commercial center anchored by locally owned businesses. Although the nearest full-service supermarket is more than a mile away, with only a small convenience market on the edge of the development, recent years have brought significant commercial and retail redevelopment along Rainier Valley's major roadway corridors. Just to the south of the development, along Martin Luther King Way, a planned light rail terminal is expected to become a center for commercial and retail activity.

As of December 1999, about 75 percent of Rainier Vista's households were female-headed, and more than 65 percent of them included one or more children. TANF accounted for the primary source of income for 220 households (47 percent), with wages from employment supporting another 20 percent. About 30 percent of the household heads were classified as disabled.

The diversity of ethnic, linguistic, and national origins is a distinguishing feature of Rainier Vista households. Residents speak 22 different languages, posing a formidable challenge to community-building efforts. Large concentrations of recent immigrants from East Africa

(Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia) and Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam) complement the African-American and American-born white residents.[18]

Program Infrastructure

Staffing and Management

Two entities are responsible for the program's staffing and management: the on-site staff (or "site team") and the Jobs-Plus collaborative. The site team carries out day-to-day program activities, while the collaborative plays an advisory role and provides additional support services to Rainier Vista residents.

Site Team

The Project Administrator is responsible for coordination and management of the site team. MDRC's on-site Operations Representative is also actively involved in management activities, providing technical assistance and, in particular, working with the Job Coaches. The Community Organizer, a Rainier Vista resident, assists the Job Coaches and serves as an important bridge between the site team and the community.

The program has four part-time Job Coaches who specialize in working with non-English-proficient residents. All have been assigned to the program from the Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA), a citywide organization located at Rainier Vista that serves immigrant and refugee women. Three Job Coaches were assigned in January 1999, and a fourth was added in May 1999.

Another full-time Job Coach works with English-proficient residents (and is referred to as the "English-language" Job Coach in this report.) From October 1998 through June 1999, this person's services were available through a contract with Washington Works, a nonprofit employment and training organization. However, the Washington Works training contract was not renewed when it expired at the end of June 1999. The Job Coach returned to Rainier Vista in August under contract to the Rainier Vista Leadership Team.

As discussed later, program participants are assigned to Job Coaches at enrollment. Job Coaches are expected to be advocates for their clients and otherwise see them through all stages of the program, including the time when they are employed and need help with job retention and advancement. As Case Managers, the Job Coaches are responsible for helping participants arrange child care, transportation, and other support services.

The Job Developer builds relationships with local employers to identify job openings for participants. This staff person also has lead responsibility for matching participants with appropriate openings and facilitating placements.[19]

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[18]About 2 percent of the households are classified as Native American, and less than 1 percent are Hispanic (any race).

[4]The Job Developer was an employee of the Seattle-King County Private Industry Council until November 1999. As of that date, he became a housing authority employee.

Over the past year, the size of the program staff has been expanded significantly. Recent developments include the hiring of six Resident Outreach and Orientation Specialists (ROOS), an on-site Housing authority Rent Incentives Coordinator, and a Community Support for Work Coordinator.

Creating the ROOS positions is part of the overall effort to tailor the program to Rainier Vista's language and ethnic diversity. The ROOS are Rainier Vista residents who collectively reflect the diverse backgrounds of their neighbors. They are responsible for scheduling and conducting orientation meetings about the services available through Jobs-Plus, including employment and training services and rent incentives. ROOS positions were created to enable residents to learn about Jobs-Plus from neighbors and in many cases from someone who speaks their native language.

Having the Rent Incentives Coordinator onsite has worked well in launching the incentives program, especially in handling administrative matters within the housing authority. In the future, enrolling residents in the rent incentives program will become the Job Coaches' responsibility; the Rent Incentives Coordinator will provide information on participants' changes of job status to the housing authority's site management office and will work with that office to manage residents' escrow accounts, monitoring the housing authority's processing of the accounts and of lease amendments.

The Community Supports for Work Coordinator is helping to implement the Community Shares program and to begin social network mapping, an exercise that involves systematic information gathering on the social connections that people in a group have established with one another. The site team also includes an organizational development consultant, who has worked with the Rainier Vista Leadership Team since December 1998. The resident organization, called the Leadership Team, hired an Executive Director as of January 2000, and the housing authority hired a Jobs-Plus Administrative Assistant to begin at the same time.

The Collaborative

The Jobs-Plus collaborative plays an advisory role in implementing Jobs-Plus, and in some instances its members provide services on a contract basis. Many of the collaborative members took an active role in planning the program, and they remain involved in implementation activities by providing employment, training, and support services to Jobs-Plus participants and by acting as a sounding board for further planning.

The collaborative was organized initially into a Coordinating Committee and four working committees, each of which deals with a key Jobs-Plus program element (Employment and Training, Incentives, Community Support for Work, and Child Care). At its December 1999 retreat, the collaborative revised its organizational structure by adding a Seniors and Disabled Services Committee and by a revamping its Childcare and Youth Services Committee.

Collaborative members are representatives of key agencies and service providers in the Seattle area, and they include public agencies such as the Department of Social and Health Services (the state welfare agency) and Employment Security; quasi-government organizations such as the Private Industry Council; and nonprofit groups such as ReWA, Neighborhood House (a citywide agency with an office at Rainier Vista), and the Rainier Park Medical Clinic. The

Project Administrator is interested in expanding the collaborative's membership to include other organizations and agencies that serve the community.

Facilities

The Jobs-Plus staff, associated service providers, and resident Leadership Team occupy three former residence buildings located near the center of the development. Each building has about 1,600 square feet of usable space and is equipped with photocopying and fax machines. One building houses offices for the Leadership Team's Executive Director, one Job Coach, and the Job Resources Center. The Center consists of a small classroom space and seven computer workstations, all networked with a high-speed Internet connection. In the adjacent building are offices for the Jobs-Plus Administrator, Employment and Training Specialist, Community Organizer, Rent Incentives Specialist, and Community Supports for Work Coordinator. This building also has a conference room that is in constant use for small-group meetings, including orientation meetings held by the ROOS outreach workers. The third building, about one-quarter mile away, has been retrofitted for classroom use and is used mainly by the Vocational ESL course and the after-school youth tutoring program. The ReWA Coaches generally see their clients at the ReWA building, which is at the edge of the development.

Program Flow

Residents come to Jobs-Plus with diverse work experiences and skills — and, typically, with some issues that must be resolved if they are to make a successful transition to the workforce. An important feature of the program flow is that a number of options depend on a participant's English language skills. For example, assignment to a particular Job Coach, approaches to developing an Individual Responsibility Plan, and the kind of training and job search assistance that are offered are all determined based on an initial language proficiency assessment.

Outreach and Recruitment

Outreach and recruitment, which thus far have been mainly conducted by Jobs-Plus staff and service providers, primarily use public events, supplemented by print materials and word-of-mouth communications that emphasize early program success stories.

The program places staff in visible positions at public events — for example, an evening picnic sponsored by United Parcel Service, an evening "Crime Night Out" barbecue, an open house celebration marking the Job Resource Center's opening, and cultural celebrations such as the Têt (Lunar New Year) celebration. At each of these events, staff and service providers have made short speeches, introducing themselves and inviting people to talk with them if they are interested in getting a good job. Speakers hand out flyers that describe the Jobs-Plus program, including a contact name and phone number. The flyers have been translated into Vietnamese, Cambodian (Khmer), and three languages spoken in East Africa (Amharic, Tigrigna, and Oromo).

In addition, at least one Jobs-Plus staff member attends each monthly meeting of the resident Leadership Team. About 40 or 50 residents — significantly more immigrants than American-born residents — usually attend these meetings. The Jobs-Plus program has a standing

item on the agenda that enables the PIC Job Developer or English-language Job Coach to give a brief announcement. All staff and service providers have business cards with the Jobs-Plus logo, which are liberally distributed at public events and monthly Leadership Team meetings.

The monthly public housing newsletter, *The Voice*, which is distributed free of charge and widely read, regularly has an article about Jobs-Plus on its Rainier Vista page. The article often features a captioned picture of at least one resident who has found a job during the past month.

Door-to-door recruitment has not proved effective. Residents complain about the number of door-to-door solicitations they receive. They often do not draw a distinction between sales calls, meeting announcements, surveys, petition drives, missionary calls, and offers from social service organizations, and they regard all of these skeptically. However, Jobs-Plus staff will approach residents directly on occasion, if a specific job opportunity arises and no qualified candidate is immediately apparent. In that case, the Job Coaches will ask the ROOS to spread the word that a job is available

Recruitment for the Jobs-Plus program was impeded to some extent by a delay in implementing the rent incentives program. An initial round of discussions to plan the incentives program had taken place from November 1997 to July 1998. Resident interest was high, culminating in a record turnout for the August 1998 Leadership Team elections. However, incentives were not available until September 1999.

While the delay temporarily dampened recruitment, it did give the program time to work on recruitment messages that emphasize rent incentives along with training and employment services. Enrollment in Jobs-Plus increased decidedly once the rent incentives were put into effect. Many residents heard that a program allows them to freeze their rents, and as a result they were more inclined to come to Jobs-Plus events to find out how they could participate.

Recruitment among American-born residents was less successful than among immigrants during the program's first several months of operation, although enrollment of these residents began to pick up in the second half of 1999. There are several possible explanations for the slow start. First, a larger portion of the Rainier Vista households that derive their incomes from disability and Supplemental Security Income and therefore are less inclined to work are American-born. In addition, it is possible that some American-born residents who are able to work regard Jobs-Plus as a program mainly for immigrants, since initially the program has invested a fair amount of effort in reaching out to the immigrant households. And finally, many American-born residents who have lived in public housing for a long time may have seen several promising-looking employment programs fail to live up to expectations, leading some to wait to see whether Jobs-Plus can deliver on its promise before agreeing to participate.

Intake, Enrollment, and Assessment

When residents sign up for benefits, they are introduced to the Job Coaches, who have primary responsibility for intake, enrollment, and assessment. To a lesser degree, the Job Developer and the Rent Incentives Coordinator may also be involved in enrollment. A two-day workshop held in February 1999 helped these staff become more familiar with the paperwork

requirements associated with enrollment as well as with the procedures for reporting status changes for participants.

When a person registers, she is asked to complete a set of enrollment forms and to provide some additional background information on issues such as citizenship and work status. The paperwork may take as long as an hour to complete. But the length of time spent enables staff to make an initial informal assessment of the enrollee's language skills and job readiness, and to become aware of citizenship status problems that may require their assistance. Because most residents are accustomed to dealing with paperwork, the intake/enrollment process does not appear to significantly discourage program participation.

While the Job Developer and Rent Incentives Coordinator are involved in enrollment, an effort is made to link the new participant to the Job Coach as quickly as possible, since it is the Job Coach who is expected to stay with the participant through all stages of the program. In a sense, the first conversations in the enrollment process function as an informal assessment, as staff try to determine the enrollee's level of English comprehension, which affects which Job Coach they will be assigned to.

If participants appear to lack English proficiency, they are referred to a ReWA Job Coach for a more formal assessment of reading and writing comprehension. Because ReWA serves women only, men who seek to improve limited English through formal instruction are referred to one of the community colleges, to the seniors program at Neighborhood House, or to the Horn of Africa ESL classes.

Enrollees who seem to be proficient in English are sent to the English language Job Coach. However, this assignment can change. As the English-language Job Coach meets with clients at this early stage, she is alert to signs that they may need to undergo further assessment of their English language skills and possibly to be reassigned to one of the ReWA Job Coaches.

Both to probe English language skills and to understand other job readiness issues, the Job Coaches ask new enrollees to fill out the intake form, which is designed to resemble a generic job application form. Job Coaches watch to see how comfortable residents are with the paperwork, and they review the work history that the resident presents. In some instances, the English-language Job Coach also has directed enrollees to the Washington Employment Security Department's computer-based occupational research guide (ORCA), available in the program's Job Resources Center, to help them identify what kind of work they would like to do. As new enrollees use the computers, she observes how they approach a new task, how they problem-solve, how they react when they are unsure of how to proceed, whether they follow instructions, whether they can read well enough to follow on-screen instructions, and how they ask for help. All these observations feed into a qualitative evaluation of job readiness.

New enrollees take part in an orientation, either in a group session organized by a ROOS or in a one-on-one session with a Job Coach. This orientation session covers the full range of services offered by the program. As the rent incentives became available in September 1999, efforts were made to have this orientation convey a consistent message about them to residents who speak different languages. Previously, different translations had led to varied understandings of rent policy proposals. The use of the six ROOS workers, covering most of Rainier Vista's major language groups, has helped communication on this issue.

Case Management and Help to Remove Employment Barriers

As Case Managers, Job Coaches work with new enrollees to develop an Action Plan, which specifies short- and long-term goals for program participation. Because this step was introduced to the program late in the fall of 1999, Job Coaches have just begun to create plans with residents. The plans are designed to be consistent with and support the Individual Responsibility Plans (IRP) required by the Department of Social and Health Services for WorkFirst participants.

Throughout the residents' participation in the program, staff offer them help and advice. In addition to the support they receive from their Job Coach, the Job Developer is also involved in advising participants, particularly during job searches but often even earlier, when he may help them select training programs that have the most potential to lead to a good job. He observes that although "tons of training programs are available, they are not all created equally," and they compete actively for clients. "Sometimes it seems like their main purpose is to get clients into training and not to get them placed in jobs."

The Job Coaches and the Job Developers have provided diverse kinds of assistance to participants to remove barriers to work — for example, helping a resident get her attorney to expedite the process of obtaining a green card, or arranging for a resident to get a pair of glasses to correct a long-standing vision problem. The English-language Job Coach instituted Paperwork Nights, holding the Job Resources Center open until 8 P.M. two nights each week and issuing a standing invitation to residents to consult on paperwork problems that can range from clearing up unpaid library fines and parking tickets or credit problems to dealing with the threat of public assistance benefits being cut off. These problems can frustrate residents' efforts to work by appearing in a routine background check or by requiring a substantial amount of workday time to deal with a bureaucracy. They can also present a nagging emotional distraction that undermines a resident's ability to present herself to prospective employers. Two or three people usually take advantage of each Paperwork Night.

As the Job Coaches enroll participants, they contact the case management office of the State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to determine whether the participant is receiving TANF assistance and, if so, what her status is in the WorkFirst program. Job Coaches have cultivated working relationships with DSHS workers on behalf of participants. For example, in the past, if DSHS caseworkers discovered problems with "change of circumstances" reporting, they usually would simply terminate a client's benefits. Reinstatement would often take several months. Once Jobs-Plus began, however, the Job Coaches created an informal agreement with the DSHS case managers for Rainier Vista residents: If the DSHS case managers discover problems with the income reporting paperwork, they try to avoid abruptly cutting off benefits by first calling the Job Coach to see if she can help correct a documentation problem.

Employment and Training Services

Jobs-Plus offers residents several different services to prepare them for work. They include the ReWA-sponsored Bilingual Job Club, Personal Effectiveness training, computer literacy training, child care certification training, and referrals to other training sources. Following are brief descriptions of these services.

Bilingual Job Club (Integrated Vocational ESL and Job Readiness Instruction). ReWA has adapted the ESL instruction for Jobs-Plus participants to emphasize English in the workplace and job preparation. Three certified instructors run ReWA Vocational ESL classes for Jobs-Plus. One instructor is a native Vietnamese speaker, one a native Cambodian speaker, and the third a native English speaker. On-site child care is available for trainees.

Enrollment in the Vocational ESL course is open on a rolling basis; at any one time, about 10 residents are enrolled. The course has no set length, and participants attend as many classes as they feel are necessary or until other circumstances intervene. While instructors have curriculum objectives, there is no minimum competency that participants must achieve, and no certificate of completion is awarded. As of December 1999, a total of 37 Rainier Vista residents had participated in the course.

Personal Effectiveness Training. From June 1998 through June 1999, Washington Works had a contract with the Jobs-Plus program to provide employment-related training to participants. The course provided traditional employment-related assistance, but it also drew heavily on the Landmark program for enhancing personal effectiveness. Landmark evolved from *est*, the New Age personal transformation movement that emphasizes, among other things, "win-win communications." The Landmark program had been refined over a period of several years, but traditionally its participants have mainly been native English speakers, and its content has been delivered over a 12- to 18-week period in a fixed sequence of curriculum modules.

The needs and interests of the Rainier Vista residents have dictated substantial changes in the Landmark training content and delivery. Part of the Landmark philosophy is to "get over" the past, rather than lugging around burdensome emotional baggage. For immigrant women from East Africa and Southeast Asia, this counsel seems misdirected, since many of these women have never had a chance to resolve the nearly unimaginable traumas they have experienced in making their way to Seattle. Many of them consider denial of the importance of these past experiences as rude and insensitive.

In addition, while the concept of "win-win" is expected to be new to many Landmark participants, it is especially at odds with the experiences of many of these immigrant women: Very often, they have been in situations where someone's gain has been at their expense. And many of them view divulging personal feelings and experiences on short acquaintance — an approach that the course encourages as a way of promoting communications — as confrontational and selfish behavior. In some cases they think that this kind of lack of reserve has caused them trouble in their lives. Finally, the emphasis on enhancing personal communication skills as a path to "getting what you want" may be a culture-bound notion that does not always translate easily for immigrants.

An initial course offering in October 1998 was seriously undersubscribed. The trainer had been hoping for 15-20 residents to enroll, but only five signed up. She was able to provide in-depth attention to each of the women, and in the course of doing that was also in a good position to pinpoint many of the mismatches between the Landmark approach and their needs and values.

With the consent of the Jobs-Plus Project Administrator, she began to modify the course content and delivery, first in minor ways, and then by substantially revamping the curriculum. She now offers services in a more flexible format that involves a shorter duration, rolling "open

entry" for course participation, and a series of modular lessons that course participants can use in a number of different sequences.

Much of the emphasis in the revamped training focuses on what the trainer terms "cultural" issues. She uses the training to make explicit the cultural expectations and assumptions of a service economy, saying she believes this approach is necessary because, "We live in a postindustrial economy, where the nature of work is shifting from making things to providing service. If you don't understand service, you will remain out of the loop."

Other important cultural issues surface during this course — and more generally among immigrant women in the program. Some of the participants are experiencing conflicts about the new opportunities for autonomy they find in U.S. culture. For example, some want to learn how to drive, but their husbands or boyfriends object. Some husbands forbid their wives to work, or tell them that if they work, they still must take responsibility for seeing that the children are safely off to school.

As noted, in addition to the stress on attitudinal and behavioral change, the Personal Effectiveness Training also focuses on employment skills. Trainees create a résumé and learn how to write cover letters and thank you notes. They talk about dressing for interviews and for work and about making transportation and child care arrangements and back-up plans. They practice interviewing and learn about the use of formal business language, typing/keyboarding skills and phone-answering skills, how to work a fax machine, and other office work, such as monitoring supplies.

Personal Effectiveness Training participants can also use a series of Power Point presentations that have been created and installed on the workstations in the Job Resources Center. The presentations illustrate specific employment-related situations that trainees might face and to which they can practice a response. One, for example, focuses on what job-seekers should say when they are phoned to come in for job interviews. A series of slides shows a photo of a Rainier Vista resident with her responses both captioned (in English) on the slide and broadcast.

Child Care Certification Training. Through a partnership with Child Care Resources, a Seattle nonprofit organization, and the State Department of Social and Health Services, the Jobs-Plus program has offered Rainier Vista residents training to help them become licensed child care workers or to set up child care services in their own homes. Eight women started the program in October 1998, and as of November 1999, four had completed it and opened in-home child care centers. The housing authority has committed to making some modest facility improvements (yard fencing) for providers. Another training course will begin in 2000.

Computer Literacy Training. The Power Point presentations, which are available to all Jobs-Plus participants (not just those in Personal Effective Training), are one of the automated training resources available at the program's Job Resources Center. Each of the Center's seven Windows-95 workstations is equipped with an integrated MS-Office applications suite (word-processing, spreadsheet, database, and presentation software), a Web browser, some keyboarding training software, and electronic versions of skills/aptitude assessment tools. The Jobs-Plus program has provisions for additional software purchases in its budget.

ReWA tries to use computer software to assist Jobs-Plus participants with their English language skills, while at the same time improving their computer literacy. Specific instruction in computers for people with limited English was a challenge in the Center's early months of operation, because it was not staffed with bilingual teachers and because it lacked software geared to learners with limited English skills. Jobs-Plus staff have discussed the need for introducing this kind of software to the Center.

Referrals to Other Training Providers. The program has established a link with the South Seattle Community College for enrolling residents in programs leading to vocational certificates and associates' degrees. Currently, two Jobs-Plus participants are enrolled. The multi-campus Seattle Community College also offers ESL classes, but it is uncertain whether any Rainier Vista residents are currently enrolled in these classes.

The Jobs-Plus staff are seeking to strengthen their ties to other organizations, principally some community-based groups. For example, TRAC (Training, Rehabilitation and Assessment Corporation, a group with multilingual capacity), the Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP), and the YWCA provide training services through the Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI), a site in the national Jobs Initiative sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. These organizations have a record of serving American-born lower-income Seattle neighborhoods, and thus by association may help foster an image of Jobs-Plus as serving the whole Rainier Vista community, not just the immigrant households. As of November 1999, planning discussions had yet to lead to placements.

Job Search and Job Development

Job Search. Some participants are referred to job search directly, and some begin after completing their training courses. Residents who are already working and who join Jobs-Plus to take advantage of the rent incentives program are encouraged to work with a Job Coach or Job Developer to find a better job.

Participants search for jobs at the Job Resources Center. They have learned to use the Center's Internet connection to look at on-line versions of the employment classified ads published by the metropolitan newspapers and at other on-line sources of employment information. The Internet is also a source of bus route and scheduling information as people make plans for getting to work.

Although participants often compare notes and may receive impromptu group lessons from the Job Coaches on the use of on-line job searches, the program does not conduct any formal group job search activities. Instead, most participants conduct job searches individually, assisted by their Job Coaches and the Job Developer.

The Job Developer sets up appointments for residents to fill out job applications, and he often attends employer interviews with clients. He said this practice may sound unorthodox, but explains why he thinks it is important:

> In the old days applying for many jobs used to be much more informal than it is today. You showed up at a job site, filled out an application or talked to the staff supervisor and if the guy liked you, he would say, "Can you be here at 7 A.M. Monday?" Nowadays these same jobs involve a more formal application process.

> There is often a drug test involved. Jobs may require an extensive background check, detailed work and residence histories ... an investigation of any criminal charges in their personal histories. As the hiring process has become more complicated, many clients need help completing the necessary paperwork.

Job Development. The Job Developer spends approximately half his time with residents and the rest reaching out to employers to locate jobs. This section focuses on his job development efforts.

From the Job Developer's perspective, the goal of the job search is to find a "good job," which means a full-time position with medical and dental benefits and adequate wages. He is reluctant to refer residents to low-paying jobs, though he considers more than just the starting wage in determining whether he will encourage a resident to pursue an opening. For example, he is willing to refer residents to jobs that pay as low as $6 to $7 per hour, there is a clear wage progress track, a good benefits package, or a good fit with the resident's child care or transportation needs. Still, he avoids low-paying menial jobs that do not have any of these benefits. "No fish guts and sewing," he says, citing jobs that typically fall to recently arrived immigrants with limited English language skills. Residents have expressed concerns about these kinds of positions. For example, one observed, "Even for a janitorial position they ask for seven years' experience. Seven years' experience to sweep the floors and clean the bathrooms! You don't need this. It isn't science or chemistry."

If the client has had personal difficulties, for example, a criminal conviction, the Job Developer tries to avoid positions that require an extensive background check or bonding/licensing, "because it does not do anyone any good to bring this to the surface." The resident loses face and the employer questions the kind of candidates the Job Developer is bringing to the employer's attention.

The Job Developer seeks placements across nearly all the economic sectors in Seattle, but some of the more prominent employers in the area — Boeing, for example — have been disappointments:

> They talk like they are interested in hiring our people, but they make it so hard, they are so bureaucratic, that it takes forever to get hired. Other places say they are hiring, but then they push you over to a temporary agency, and you are not actually working for Microsoft, say, but for a temp agency with no benefits. Genie Industries [a local manufacturer of mechanical lift equipment] had made strong overtures to hire Rainier Vista residents, but after all the discussions, only one person actually has a job there.

These setbacks do not reflect a scarcity of jobs in the Seattle metropolitan area, which has a strong local economy. Rather, one challenge for the Job Developer has been finding Rainier Vista residents who have a suitable set of skills to fill the many available positions. The Job Developer reports that nearly every day the phone rings with employers asking if he can help them fill positions, but he cannot always send them applicants with skills that match the jobs. It is often the case, he said, that a particular resident will have some but not all the skills needed. For example, a prospective bakery worker may have the requisite physical strength but no experience in the food industry. Limited English language skills present a particular placement challenge.

The Job Developer generally will not match residents to jobs if transportation appears to be too inconvenient. Although he has not yet been successful, he has tried to find employers who will consider hiring several Rainier Vista residents at a time, so a van pool can be set up. He thinks this arrangement could help some of the East African women make the transition to work, since for cultural reasons they may be more comfortable with group travel than with commuting to jobs on their own.

Job Creation

Besides the positions that the Job Developer finds, two other avenues to employment bear mentioning: positions in the program itself and self-employment opportunities.

Employment in Jobs-Plus. Since the program began, it has created a full-time Community Organizer's position and a part-time (30 hours/week) General Assistant position, which have been filled by residents. Also, as noted, six part-time Resident Outreach and Orientation Specialists have been hired.

Self-Employment Opportunities. The initial plans for Jobs-Plus called for training and financial support (a revolving Enterprise Loan fund) for residents who are interested in starting their own businesses. The fund is not yet officially available. The Project Administrator is seeking help from the University of Washington Business School to assess its feasibility and possibly to develop plans for setting it up. Since an entrepreneurship model is consistent with the way people already manage in the informal economy, some Jobs-Plus staff think the fund is a promising option for participants.

By December 1999, two residents had started businesses: an Ethiopian delicatessen/grocery store and a translation/interpreters service. These individuals were referred for technical assistance to the local office of the federal Small Business Administration and to the Career-Links program at South Seattle Community College. In addition, as noted, four women have opened home child care businesses. They were encouraged to do so by Childcare Resources, in part because this arrangement is generally more lucrative than working as a daycare facility employee.

Child Care Services

Participants can take advantage of child care services at various points in the program. Neighborhood House operates an Early Head Start program that is located in a building on the edge of Rainier Vista, next door to the Seattle Public School District's Head Start program. Attendance in both programs is not restricted to Rainier Vista residents, but many take advantage of the programs' being located nearby. Through these programs, young children receive part-day child care.

In addition, as noted, several Jobs-Plus participants have received training and certification to offer services in their homes. With up to six slots per caregiver, the availability of child care services — especially care that might be described as "culturally appropriate" — has increased significantly because of Jobs-Plus. On an informal basis, child care may become more widely available through residents' participation in the Community Shares services exchange system, where time contributed in service to neighbors or the community can be traded for services from other residents.

Child care resources were also expanded when the Neighborhood House facility lowered its toddler age definition from 18 months to 12 months. However, this shift has made child care available to only a handful of additional households with young children.

Job Retention and Advancement

The Job Developer and Job Coaches have tried to maximize the chances for retention by making suitable matches in the first place. No overall strategy is used in helping working residents keep their jobs, but the Job Developer and Job Coaches try to follow up for several weeks with each person placed in a new position and with that person's employer or supervisor. In fall 1999, staff were meeting to better formalize a long-term schedule for checking with residents placed through the program.

Initially, the implementation plans had called for hiring a retention specialist. However, staff now feel that, rather than handing off that responsibility, it is better for employed clients to work with someone they know and trust and who is familiar with the circumstances that led them to the placement. For this approach to succeed, however, staff members say that the Job Coaches' caseloads must be manageable enough to allow them to work on retention issues as well as training and assisted search/placement.

The On-Site Operations Representative believes that retention had not been a sufficiently clear focus for the program but notes that it has recently received greater attention. In general, she observes, participants have needed to take the initiative to come to staff members to discuss problems that might affect their ability to keep jobs. She went on to say:

> Our record keeping about retention needs to improve, and we need to develop at least a skeleton of a retention plan, a checklist really, for individual clients to use in creating their own supports. Childcare, transportation, and back-ups for these in case "plan A" falls through — the Job Coaches know that these issues consistently come to the surface, but if we make a plan, then the Job Coaches can use this as a tool to work with clients and review as part of the placement process, helping to assure retention and advancement later on.

Help with job retention occasionally comes not from the Job Developer or Job Coaches but from more informal sources. For example, the Neighborhood House Childcare Center Director has worked at Rainier Vista for several years and sees many of the working mothers every morning. She keeps in close touch with the Jobs-Plus staff to make sure that child care arrangements can be made to accommodate working parents, so she knows about prospective placements in their planning stages. She also knows about other personal issues that can affect job retention. In one instance, a mother with a history of substance abuse and rehabilitation had found a job with the help of Jobs-Plus. The first morning that she did not bring her child to the child care center, the Director contacted her. The resident's substance use had indeed resumed, and with the help of the woman's mother, the Director and Job Coach were able to intervene and help this woman hold on to her new job, at least for a time.

Financial Incentives

In mid-August 1999, the Seattle Housing authority gave the Program Administrator permission to proceed with implementing the rent incentives policy. This decision was made after more than a year continued deferral of HUD's authorization to proceed with the program.[20] In the interim, the program took advantage of existing federal incentives. In February 1999, the English-language Job Coach arranged for professional accountants to provide volunteer help to Rainier Vista residents in preparing their federal income tax returns. The consultations emphasized the possibility of receiving Earned Income Tax Credits. About 40 households received this assistance.

In addition, while staff were waiting for the rent incentives to go into effect, the Rainier Vista incentives team, which includes residents, established administrative structures for the program. The plan itself severs the link between residents' incomes and rent levels. Under the pre-Jobs-Plus rent structure, a family's rent increased as its income increased, often creating a disincentive to work. In response, the Jobs-Plus incentives plan changes the income-based rent structure to one that resembles the structure of the broader rental market, which bases rent on apartment size.

Because the incentives team recognized that families would be unable to afford market-rate housing immediately, they established a series of flat steps that gradually increase rent to market rate over several years. (See Figure 8.1 for a schematic presentation of the incentives plan.) Residents who are not working when they sign up for incentives have their rents frozen at their current levels for two years; rent does not increase, even if family income does. This means that residents can take jobs without their rents rising and consequently keep more of their incomes for other expenses. After the freeze, rent increases every two years until it equals 100 percent of the market rate. (The interim steps equal 40 and 75 percent of market rate.) If a resident's current rent is below 40 percent of market rate, the rent is frozen at the current level for two years. If a resident is already working and paying more than 40 percent of market rate, the rent will be rolled back to the 40 percent level for two years.

Residents on fixed incomes such as SSI can also take advantage of incentives. When they sign up, their rents are frozen at their current levels, and rent reviews are reduced from once a year to once every five years. These residents will also be able to earn a rent reduction of $1 for every hour of volunteer work in the community beyond 10 initial hours and up to 60 hours per month.

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[20]In March 1999, the Seattle Housing Authority decided to fund a rent incentives package for Rainier Vista's Jobs-Plus participants rather than waiting any longer for uncertainties to be resolved at the federal level. After this March decision, the incentives package was scheduled to take effect on July 1, 1999. However, a number of details associated with its implementation could not be resolved while housing authority and Jobs-Plus staff were attending to a HOPE VI grant application submitted to HUD at the end of May 1999. Further complications arose in July concerning Seattle's participation in another demonstration program, the "Moving to Work" pilot, and enrollment finally took effect in September 1999.

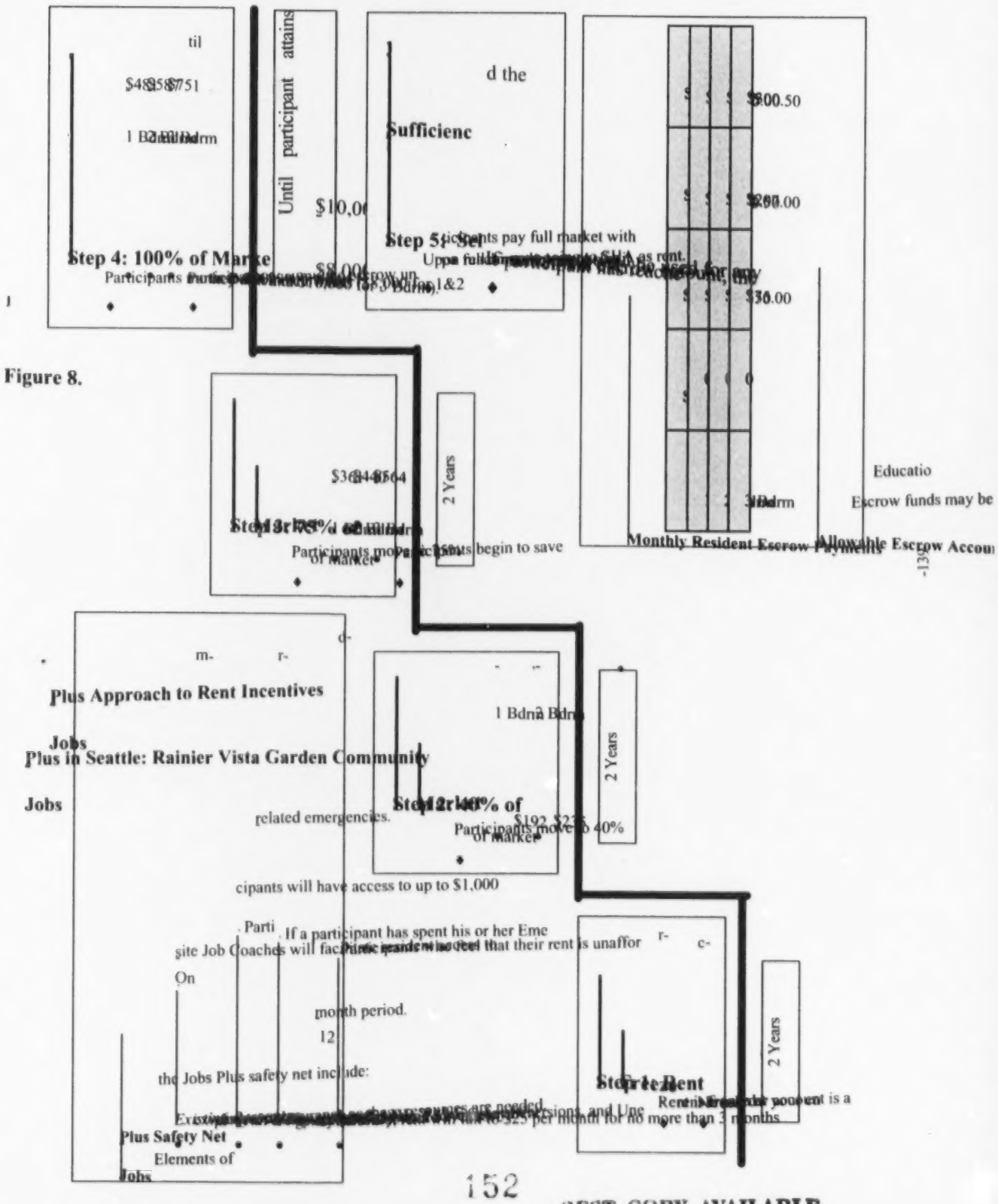

Figure 8.

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To protect residents from paying rents they cannot afford, Seattle's plan includes several safety net features. Residents who cannot pay their rents can get help from their Job Coaches to search for alternative income sources, such as unemployment insurance — if they are eligible — TANF diversion assistance, or a withdrawal of up to $1,000 from their escrow savings. They can also appeal to the Jobs-Plus Rent Review Committee, which includes the Jobs-Plus Administrator, the Community Manager, and one other collaborative partner. This committee can approve a temporary rent reduction up to $25 per month for three months, or it can establish a long-term rent plan designed to ensure that residents can meet their program goals.

The incentives are complemented by a savings plan that helps residents accumulate from $8,000 to 10,000 (depending on family size) over eight years. The rationale for the plan is twofold: to encourage residents to work, earn more, and become self-sufficient; and to enable them to ultimately afford market-rate housing. The savings incentive is available to all residents in the incentives plan who pay a flat rate, though not to those whose rents have been frozen.

As soon as residents begin paying the flat rate, the housing authority makes monthly deposits into an interest-bearing escrow account. (See the attached graphic for additional details.) The level of the deposit equals half the difference between a family's old and new rent. Residents can accumulate savings until they reach the maximum limit ($8,000-10,000), and until this point they can use the funds for specified purposes only: purchasing a home, pursuing educational goals, or starting up a business. If residents move out of Rainier Vista, they can no longer continue to accumulate savings. However, they can take with them what they have accumulated. If they move out of public housing entirely, they can use the savings as they wish; if they move somewhere else in the public housing system, the funds must be used for the three purposes established for Rainier Vista residents.

Residents learn about incentives along other with other program benefits at an orientation session. When they meet with Job Coaches, the requirements and benefits of incentives are explained in more detail. As soon as they enroll in Jobs-Plus and for as long as they are making reasonable efforts to reach the employment and self-sufficiency goals that they have committed to in their Action Plans, they receive the incentives.

The housing authority began enrolling residents in the incentives program in September 1999. As of December 1999, 68 of the development's 450 families had signed up for the program.

Community Support for Work

The community support for work element distinguishes Jobs-Plus from many other programs that encourage a transition from welfare to work for public housing residents. It is also the element that to date is least well developed conceptually — at least when compared with the employment and training services and incentives package — and thus has been most challenging to implement. Nevertheless, the program has made some headway in this area. Modest steps have been taken to change institutional arrangements in ways that support work and create the conditions that make it more possible for residents to focus on employment goals. Examples of institutional change are the Paperwork Nights offered to residents and the interventions by program staff to streamline bureaucratic procedures associated with TANF participation.

In addition, three sets of program activities have the potential to strengthen social networks in ways that facilitate employment: organizational development of the Rainier Vista Leadership Team, the Community Shares initiative, and a Social Network Mapping effort.

Rainier Vista Leadership Team and Organizational Development

The Jobs-Plus staff believe that a precondition for establishing a community support for work component is the organizational development of the Rainier Vista Leadership Team. They assert that for peer support networks to develop and function, they must be sustained by a permanent institution such as the Leadership Team — a group that is expected to be stable, even as residents and families move in and out.

Jobs-Plus staff also believe that the residents must take the lead in building community. In one staff member's words, "If there is a suggestion for people to get together for dinners once a week or once a month, how far do we go in supporting that before it becomes 'our' dinner and not 'theirs'? If people organize tutoring help for Adult Basic Education, can they come to us for advice on how to recruit tutors, or does that then become 'our' program? We can certainly reinforce what they do, and facilitate it by making space available, but the idea and the energy have to come from the residents."

To promote this kind of resident empowerment, the Executive Board of the Rainier Vista Leadership Team has been working with a local consultant to build a self-sustaining leadership organization in Rainier Vista. The consultant has held a series of training sessions to help Board members and interested residents learn how to conduct business and how to resolve disputes among Board members. Because the Board members come from diverse ethnic backgrounds and different interest groups within the community, consensus is not easily achieved. The training has enabled the Leadership Team to develop fair decision-making processes and to build the infrastructure that allows members to manage a budget, plan events, and enter into contracts with service providers. The Board currently holds contracts with the General Assistant and the Job Coach (for English-proficient residents) and administers approximately $200,000 from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, including Drug Elimination Grant and TOPS monies. In addition, the Board is currently in the process of hiring an Executive Director, who will assume responsibilities for its daily functioning and financing.

Community Shares Service Exchange

A second element of the community support for work strategy at Rainier Vista is "Community Shares," a service exchange system designed to expand collaboration and support networks in the community. Community Shares is based on a model promoted by the Time Dollar Institute, which allows participants to receive credit for contributing services to others (for example, child care, home repair, transportation, tutoring). In exchange for credits accumulated, participants can request services from others. A central inventory lists residents who have skills they are willing to make available, and a record is kept of each participant's volunteered time. In addition to service exchange, Community Share credits can be exchanged for a $50 reduction in rent or for material resources. For example, the project director has arranged for several surplus housing authority personal computers to be awarded to residents who have volunteered a minimum of 70 hours of service.

Planning for Community Shares began in February 1999, when the Jobs-Plus staff held a meeting with a representative of the Time Dollar Institute. At the March 1999 monthly meeting of the resident Leadership Team, the idea of establishing such a system was discussed and favorably received. In May 1999, another Time Dollar Institute representative met with Jobs-Plus staff and residents and provided further technical assistance on such matters as developing a services inventory and tracking system and providing some initial incentives to participate (for example, rent reductions, refurbished personal computers). Led by the Leadership Team's organizational development consultant, a group of residents assembled on successive Saturdays in June 1999 to further discuss preparations. In September 1999, a Community Supports for Work Coordinator was hired to operate the Community Shares program and a number of related activities. Through its surplus inventory, the housing authority donated computers to be used as incentives in the program. It is also prepared to make rent reductions available to participants as incentives, although no one has thus far sought them.

As of December 1999, about 40 individuals had signed up for the program, with the initial meetings generating a great deal of interest. However, it is too early to tell whether Community Shares will lead to sustained community support for work. Planning efforts have not yet led to noticeable exchanges of services. Most time credits accrued through December 1999 have been for attendance at meetings, rather than for actual service exchanges.

Social Network Mapping

The third community support for work activity is an effort to develop a better understanding of the social network ties that already exist among Rainier Vista residents. With this information, the Jobs-Plus staff hope to develop appropriate outreach tools and job search/retention service delivery techniques.

As noted earlier, Rainier Vista's resident population is visibly divided by language, ethnicity, culture, and national origin. Little systematic information is available about the extent to which and in what settings people from different subgroups maintain social ties with one another. If it is important in building community support for work that social ties transcend subgroup boundaries, then more information about intergroup interactions should be produced.[21]

To develop a better understanding of social networks in Rainier Vista, the Community Support for Work Coordinator and the MDRC Operations Representative have designed a protocol for interviewing residents about whom they turn to for support, broadly defined. These staff members plan to hold a series of group sessions with residents, the Leadership Team, and service providers to create a "map" existing social network ties among Rainier Vista residents. Based on information from this exercise, the staff will work with residents to identify

[21]It should be noted, however, that the classic analytical work by sociologist Mark Granovetter and his colleagues on the "strength of weak (network) ties" (1973, 1982) suggests that a substantial amount of useful employment-related information comes from "weak" ties (for example "friend of a friend"). This finding suggests that it may not be necessary to promote activities that aim for strengthening ties community-wide — that it may be more productive to continue working with Rainier Vista residents subgroup by subgroup. See Granovetter. 1973. The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78: 1360-1380; and Granovetter. 1982. The Strength of Weak Ties (Revisited). In P. Marsden and N. Lin, eds., *Social Structure and Network Analysis*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp. 105-130.

needs for support services and then try to encourage greater use of social networks to help meet them.

Conclusions

Several observations emerge from this summary of Seattle's first year of program implementation. First, Rainier Vista's households form a diverse community with a range of work-related skills and job placement challenges. Even with Seattle's currently robust economy, flexibility and resourcefulness are needed to design useful employment and training services for this population. For this reason, service providers balance formal procedures with informal, individually tailored interventions.

Second, when the rent incentives became available to Rainier Vista households enrolled in Jobs-Plus, the program witnessed a surge in demand for services.

Third, even as initial employment and training services are provided to an expanding clientele, more attention will need to be paid to the question of job retention and wage progression.

Finally, the resident Leadership Team's organizational development has the potential to institutionalize community support for work that can be sustained well after the demonstration program's technical assistance is completed. The Community Shares service exchange system is an example of using the innovative community support for work approach, but this program element will need time to develop.